"THE TREASURE BEARERS," A THRILLING CANADIAN STORY NEXT WEEK

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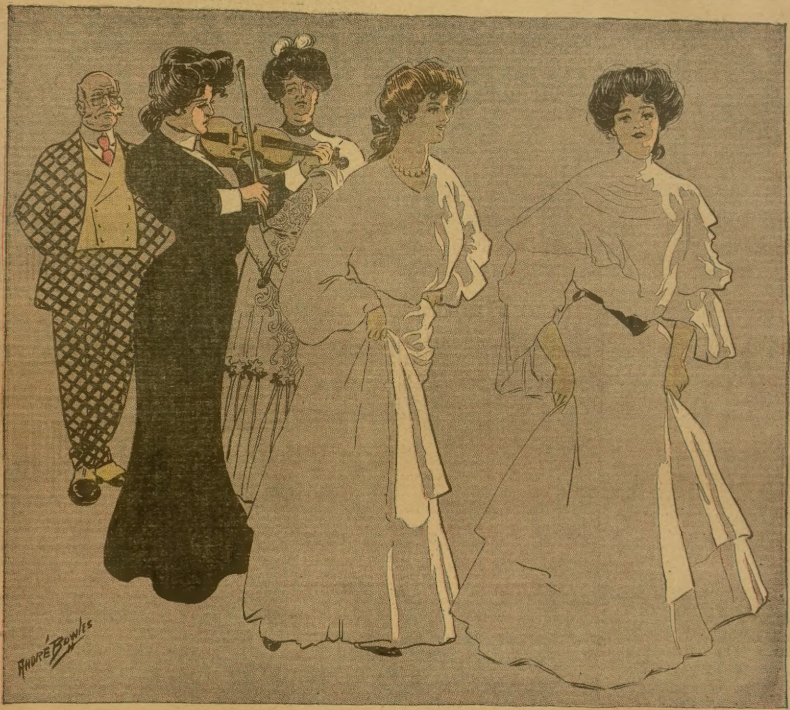

THE MYSTERIOUS GOVERNESS

BY ADRIENNE ROUCOLLE.

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CHAPTER I.

ADRIANA.

'It would be ridiculous if I were to receive this young person alone, besides it would make you appear an unfeeling father who did not take the proper interest in the welfare of his children. Aside from that, your presence will produce a better impression on this woman, for seeing us together will show her that I do not act alone, that I have your support," said Madame Boursier as she leaned back in her chair and looked at her husband who stood undecided by the door.

The Boursiers had made a fortune in a silk manufactory of Lyon, and since they had retired from the trade Madame Boursier had been tireless in her efforts to enter titled society and in trying to make her new acquaintances forget by the splendor of their millions, that on either side, their ancestors were only coarse-grained peasants of base origin. Of a vain, selfish nature, she was unsupportably proud with inferiors and equally unsupportably servile with superiors.

In the hope of being nearer her beloved nobles, she had forced her husband to purchase one of the most sumptuous residences in Toulouse, the most aristocratic city of France. And there, by the expenditure of their living, by her gorgeous toilets and elegant equipages, she hoped to draw about her some of those nobles whose only wealth was an ancestral chateau and an ancient name. Beside the residence in this city they had also purchased a chateau in Bretagne, where, during the hunting season, they would lavishly entertain the few titled persons they had been able to rope in during the winter season.

Monsieur Boursier, on the other hand, was the very opposite of his wife. Of a jovial disposition, without any of the arrogance of pride, he was as pleasant with the day laborer as with the prince, and therefore equally well liked by both. And this genial bonhommie did more to win the esteem of the exclusive society of Toulouse than did his wife's arrogance. Of her would be said:

"The conceited prig! What right has she to put on airs like that when, if it were not for her husband's millions, she would not be tolerated even in our antechambers."

But of her husband they would say:

"There's a man who hasn't an ounce of conceit and who, by forgetting that he is rich, makes you forget that he is not noble."

Thus it was that while Madame Boursier thought that it was due to her elegance and the insolent display of her wealth that they were slowly making their way into the elite of the titled society of Toulouse, the truth was that she was simply endured because her husband was liked.

The cause of today's discussion was the hiring of a new governess for their children, Isabelle, aged eighteen, and Berthe, who was about to enter her sixteenth year. Beside these two daughters, they had a son of twenty-five, still in college at Paris.

"Such a large family!" would sigh the unfortunate mother. "So bourgeois, and not at all aristocratie in smallness!"

Their governess had left them the week before and today a new applicant was to present herself. Monsieur hesitated near the door at his wife's last remark, undecided whether to make a hasty escape now and face the storm afterwards, or to try to convince her that he was perfectly incompetent to judge the good or bad qualities of the governess. But, as usual, the fear of a scene and of the unreasonable reproaches with which his wife was sure to overwhelm him should he disobey her caprice, caused him to pause and say:

"But, my dear Constance, what would I know about her suitability as a governess. Such matters are for you to decide and——"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Madame in icy tones. "You don't take enough interest in the welfare of your daughters to make a study of such things, but it is not necessary that everybody should know how careless you are in these matters."

Monsieur Boursier gave a resigned sigh as he slowly walked back to the fireplace by which sat his wife; then he asked:

"Well, what will you expect me to do?"

"Nothing. Just remain with me while I question this woman. All I want is the moral support of your presence."

Monsieur Boursier ceased to protest. He knew his wife and for the sake of peace was willing to sacrifice his inclinations. So he resumed his seat and waited.

A few minutes later the doorbell rang and a liveried servant, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, announced the governess. She entered a few minutes later, a tall, elegant creature in a severe black gown of the latest cut. Her face was heavily veiled, but her general appearance indicated youth. With the ease of a well-bred person she advanced slowly toward Madame Boursier, who eyed her critically from her eye-glass, much as she would some piece of furniture she wished to purchase.

"Madame, I must first beg your pardon for being a little late, but a slight accident at the Place du Capitole delayed my carriage."

The voice was grave, almost sad, but extremely sweet and low, together with the exquisite smallness of the hands and feet and the elegance of her mien, indicated more the lady than the servant.

"Her carriage!" thought Madame Boursier with a sneer. "One would take her for a duchess to hear her speak! If she remains with me long I will soon teach her her place!"

Meanwhile she kept her critical eye on the woman before her, who, however, did not show the least sign of embarrassment. At last she spoke:

"So you are the candidate for governess?"

"I am."

Monsieur Boursier, seeing that the stranger was still standing and feeling it was a lack of good breeding on their part, said as he smilingly indicated a chair:

"Will you not be seated, Mademoiselle. Madame Boursier has, I believe, a few questions to ask you before we decide upon giving you the position."

A gracious bow from the stranger as she took her seat and a furious glance from his wife was the reward Monsieur Boursier got for his courtesy. On seeing the look of anger flash in Constance Boursier's eyes, a disdainful yet pitying smile curled the governess' lips.

"Will you please remove your veil, Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle—I have forgotten your name; those common names are so little spoken in our world that they are very hard to recall," said Madame with more hauteur than ever.

Once more the half-contemptuous, half-amused smiled curled the stranger's lips, then as she slowly unfastened her veil she said with a touch of irony in her tones:

"I don't doubt but what to an aristocratic mind the common name of Adriana Doban would seem hard to recall, as it means neither noble birth nor wealth."

Madame Boursier flushed under the delicate reproach conveyed more by the voice than by the words, but she had no time to reply, for the veil being removed, she now saw her visitor's face and its tragic beauty left her an instant without words.

The face was beautiful, though tragically sad. The large brown eyes were filled with a strange fire of pride, almost of defiance, while the somewhat reckless smile which parted the sensitive lips indicated the revolt of a soul, which, having suffered all the tortures of despair and disappointment, is in open rebellion with God and men.

Madame Boursier did not remain long under the spell of surprise caused by this unexpected beauty, for she remarked in more icy tones than before:

"You are very young to teach. I had hoped to secure some one with more experience—and—and more knowledge of the world. My elder daughter is to make her debut this winter and I wished some one who could fit her for that end."

FRIENDS HELP

St. Paul Park Incident.

"After drinking coffee for breakfast I always felt languid and dull, having no ambition to get to my morning duties. Then in about an hour or so a weak, nervous derangement of the heart and stomach would come over me with such force I would frequently have to lie down.

"At other times I had severe headaches; stomach finally became affected and digestion so impaired that I had serious chronic dyspepsia and constipation. A lady, for many years State President of the W. C. T. U., told me she had been greatly benefited by quitting coffee and using Postum Food Coffee; she was troubled for years with asthma. She said it was no cross to quit coffee when she found she could have as delicious an article as Postum.

"Another lady, who had been troubled with chronic dyspepsia for years, found immediate relief on ceasing coffee and beginning Postum twice a day. She was wholly cured. Still another friend told me that Postum Food Coffee was a Godsend to her, her heart trouble having been relieved after leaving off coffee and taking on Postum.

"So many such cases came to my notice that I concluded coffee was the cause of my trouble and I quit and took up Postum. I am more than pleased to say that my days of trouble have disappeared. I am well and happy." "There's a Reason." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

"I am not as young as you seem to think, Madame," slowly replied the governess, "since I am past thirty. Beside, when I was governess for Mademoiselle de Charmeuse, before her marriage to the Duc de Bois-Fleury, I had an excellent opportunity to learn the ways of society, since I was treated as one of the family."

"But you surely would not expect that of us! You will, I hope, know how to keep your place!" hastened to exclaim Madame Boursier, somewhat alarmed by the governess' words.

"Have no fear," and a smile passed like a shadow over the expressive face. "You would not let me forget my place and I am not a person to take liberties which are not offered me."

This was said in such haughty tones and with such a proud toss of the head, that for an instant Madame Boursier was abashed and to cover her embarrassment she hastened to ask:

"You have brought a recommendation from your late place, have you not?"

"Yes, here is a letter from Madame de Bois-Fleury, and should this not be enough you can write her any time for further information," and the governess handed a letter to Madame Boursier.

Her hand quivered with pleasure as she touched that letter. Here at the bottom of the dainty, perfumed note glittered one of the oldest, most noble names of France, that of Bois-Fleury! She read the warm praise contained in the letter with evident satisfaction, for she might hereafter boast that her daughters' governess had been especially recommended to her by Madame de Bois-Fleury.

"This is a very good recommendation," she said at last, "and the name which signs it is so well known that there can be no doubt as to its sincerity. Persons in our world," graciously classing herself with the noblest aristocracy of France, "are very careful whom we recommend. I suppose you know some other language beside French."

"I speak English and Spanish."

"Where were you educated?"

"I spent several years in Paris at the convent of the Dames du Sacre-Coeur."

"Dames du Sacre-Coeur!" exclaimed Madame in surprise. "Why, only members of the nobility are admitted in that institution!"

The governess bit her lip, while a sudden flush of color lit up the pale cheeks, then in hurried tones, like one anxious to conclude a discussion.

"I was assistant instructor in one of the branches. After giving my lessons I took special courses in the branches in which I wished to perfect myself."

"Ah, I see. Though from the way you first spoke one might have thought you had been there as a pupil."

"You seem to forget, Madame, that it takes a noble name and a large income to be a pupil in that institution!" and a strange smile crossed the governess' lips.

"You are right. For an instant I forgot to whom I was speaking. Have you a letter from the Dames du Sacre-Coeur?"

Adriana rose and with a proud gesture replaced her veil, saying:

"If the name of Madame de Bois-Fleury is not sufficient to show you that I am capable of being the governess of your daughters," with an involuntary inflection on "your," "I will seek some one who is not so hard to satisfy."

She made a movement as though to take the letter which Madame Boursier had handed to her husband to read, but Madame detained her saying in softer tones, already subdued by the proud dignity of the governess:

"Why, Mademoiselle Doban, I meant nothing by that remark. I simply thought that you had forgotten the letter of reference from the Sacre-Coeur. The name, as you have just remarked, of the accomplished Madame de Bois-Fleury, is all the proof I need. You know music, of course?"

For an instant the governess hesitated, then with an almost invisible shrug of the shoulders, she resumed her seat and replied:

"Yes, I play both the piano and the violin, while I took lessons in vocal training from Signor Cavaglioni, the Italian tenor."

"Cavaglioni. Why, I thought he never gave lessons outside of the nobility and that even then one had to be of the highest rank before he would condescend to give instruction."

An impatient frown contracted the governess' brow, while her hands clenched nervously on her lap, as she replied somewhat abruptly:

"He must have occasionally made exceptions, since he certainly did give me lessons."

"Well," at last said Madame after a slight pause," do you not think, Hector, that we had better make arrangements with Mademoiselle?"

"Why, my dear," said the unfortunate Monsieur Boursier, who had not enjoyed his position during the conversation, "whatever you think best in this matter will satisfy me," and rising, he walked rapidly to the door where he paused for an instant to say: "While you come to terms with Mademoiselle, I will take a look at the stables."

And without heeding the evident displeasure which gathered on his wife's brow, he hurried away after addressing a gracious bow and a smile of sympathy to the governess.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

While this was taking place in the drawing-room, upstairs in the schoolroom the two sisters were impatiently waiting for their fate to be decided. A change of governess meant much to the two girls, since, with their mother's mistaken ideas of etiquette, they were kept almost in confinement in the schoolroom, the governess being their constant companion. In her unreasoned pride, Madame Boursier allowed her daughters none of the intimate homelife of the bourgeois family. Aside from a daily ride with her in the chaise and an hour in the evening spent in the drawing-room, they remained in semi-confinement in the schoolroom. Madame Boursier thought that this exclusion of her daughters from the family circle indicated a truly aristocratic taste. She therefore deprived both her husband and herself of the pleasure of having more in common with their children.

Monsieur Boursier had tried to protest but as usual he had for the sake of keeping peace in the home given in to his wife's wishes. Not being able to have his daughters with him, he had formed the habit of going up to them whenever his wife was detained downtown by her shopping or was taking luncheon with friends. On those days all studies were abandoned and he was made to preside over the informal meal taken by his daughters in the schoolroom, and these moments of relaxation would repay him for all the tyranny he had to endure when dining or lunching with his wife in the gilt-loaded dining-room below.

The girls adored their father and these stolen feasts were like rays of sunshine in the dull routine of their daily life. The question of the hiring of a new governess was, therefore, of vital importance to them. Would she be a weak, subdued creature, like the one who had been dismissed, or a person like their mother whose strict enforcement of the rules of etiquette would deprive them of the little liberty they now enjoyed?

Hence, seated by the brightly burning grate fire, the two sisters were waiting in silence. They had discussed the subject so extensively that now they had nothing more to say and all they could do was to wait. So they remained, each absorbed in her own thoughts.

Isabelle, the elder of the two, was a dainty, diminutive creature scarcely five feet one inch in height, with a sweet, flower-like face. Though naturally gentle and tender, her mother's pernicious advice had already spoiled the masterpiece of her loving heart, and the sentiments of pride and arrogance which the mother had so adroitly inoculated in the young girl's soul were beginning to bear fruit and Isabelle had already lost the charm of sweet simplicity and was fast becoming a second edition to her mother's insufferable priggishness.

As to Berthe, she had inherited with her father's strong constitution all his jovial good humor and his exuberance of spirits and was as pleasant and friendly with the cook as she was with any of her mother's titled friends. Taller than her sister by four inches, big-boned, red-cheeked, hale and hearty, she was the despair of her mother and the pride and favorite of her father.

"Oh, that child!" Madame would often wail, "will disgrace us all. She is more like a milkmaid than a lady! What punishment to think that a daughter of mine should be so common, both in manner and in appearance. I will never dare to introduce her in society! Oh, if she only resembled Isabelle!"

But Monsieur Boursier, who admired far more Berthe's lively, unaffected manner than Isabelle's haughty grace and studied demeanor, would invariably reply:

"Why, Constance, what do you find out of the way with Berthe? Has she not a very pretty and expressive face, full of life and intelligence?"

"Oh, Hector, how very bourgeois are your tastes! Berthe has beauty, it is true, but it is of a vulgar sort. Her cheeks are so very red!"

"Why, my dear, you should be thankful for this, since red cheeks speak of health and a strong constitution. For my part, I assure you, that I prefer to see Berthe with her rosy face than Isabelle with her sickly pallor. She is so frail that one is afraid to touch her for fear that she will fall to pieces."

Then Madame Boursier would shrug her shapely shoulders and say with evident contempt for her husband's taste:

"She is all the more ladylike for that."

This would end the discussion for the time being, since Monsieur Boursier, knowing that his wife would ever have the last word, would cease discussing the somewhat delicate subject of the relative value of their two daughters.

At last Berthe looked up from her stare at the fire and turning to her sister questioned:

"Do you think the lady we saw entering the garden a while ago was the governess?"

"Without doubt," replied Isabelle in a soft, low voice, so different from the loud, hearty tones of her younger sister. "It was five minutes past the hour appointed for her coming."

"What do you think of her?"

"How can I tell, since I did not see her face. Her carriage, however, was excellent and her dress, though severe in cut and color, bespoke good taste. The fact is, I care very little about her appearance; all I wish is that she be well versed in the languages and in music. I won't pretend to make of her a companion, far less a friend."

"I only hope she's pretty," remarked Berthe after some seconds of silence. "When one has to live day after day with the same person it is much more pleasant to have a pretty face to look at."

Isabelle had no time to answer, since the door opened and Madame Boursier and the governess entered. The arrangements had been concluded to the immense satisfaction of the ex-manufacturer's wife, who had found, with deep surprise, that Mademoiselle Doban showed a surprising unconcern in regard to wages. One would almost think that money matters were of supreme indifference to her. Madame Boursier had therefore taken advantage of this disinterestedness and had secured the services of the new governess at a lower rate than she had ever paid before, at the same time feeling sure that she was securing a higher grade of service than it had ever been her good fortune to obtain. Now that everything had been arranged, she was bringing Adriana up to introduce her to her new charges.

The governess' beauty produced its usual effect on the two girls and they at once fell under its spell. Madame Boursier made less haughty by the excellent bargain she had just concluded, introduced Adriana, saying:

"My dears, this is Mademoiselle Doban, whose services I have secured for you. Mademoiselle, my daughters, Mademoiselle Isabelle and Mademoiselle Berthe."

Adriana bowed and as a faint smile lit up for an instant the gloom of her face, she said:

"I hope, Mademoiselles, that we will get along nicely together and find in the association of the schoolroom both pleasure and profit."

Isabelle drew herself up with an instinctive gesture of hauteur, while impulsive Berthe hastened to exclaim, in spite of the evident displeasure which gathered on her mother's and sister's faces:

"Oh, I am sure we will soon be the best of friends!"

Adriana saw the look which greeted this remark, and as an amused smile came to her lips, she hastened to say:

"I do not hope for your friendship, Mademoiselle, though it would brighten my life to think that you considered me more than a servant, but I will never so forget my place enough as to expect more than your tolerance and, in time, perhaps a little gratitude for the aid I may be able to give you in your studies."

Though these words were addressed to the younger girl, Adriana's searching eye watched the face of the elder sister and she was gratified to see that her words had chased the frown which Berthe's impulsive offer of friendship had caused to gather on her brow.

"I am glad to see that you are so sensible, Mademoiselle," remarked Madame, much pleased with the governess' reply, "and that you will know how to keep your place in spite of my younger daughter's vulgar familiarity."

Sudden tears filled Berthe's eyes. Adriana saw them, but said nothing, waiting patiently for the time when, alone with the young girl, she might explain the reason of her seeming rejection of her generous offer of friendship.

"Your duties will be simple, Mademoiselle," continued Madame after a moment's pause. "You will assist my younger daughter in all her studies and with her music, while to Mademoiselle Isabelle you will give advanced lessons in music, singing, the etiquette of the drawing-room, while perfecting her English and Spanish. Your meals will be served here and you will preside over the young ladies' table, since they are never permitted to dine with us—we entertain so much. After Mademoiselle Isabelle has made her debut you will have only Mademoiselle Berthe to look after, and I will take sole charge of my elder daughter.

Adriana bowed but said nothing and Madame Boursier continued:

"Your sleeping apartment is on the other side of the hall, and as I don't doubt that you must be tired, Mademoiselle Berthe will conduct you to it. Tomorrow morning you will enter on your duties. The young ladies can tell you much better than I about their advancement in their studies."

"Will I not have some hours of absolute liberty, Madame?"

"Why, certainly. I forgot to mention that Sunday afternoons would be yours. During the morning, however, you would be expected to accompany the young ladies to mass. You can also have an hour every day during the time my daughters ride with me. Aside from that I shall expect you to devote most of your time to them."

"Very well, Madame. Now if Mademoiselle Berthe would please conduct me to my room I would be glad for a few moments' rest before dinner."

Berthe and the governess were moving toward the door, when a thought struck Madame Boursier and caused her to recall Adriana.

"Mademoiselle," she said, "one more remark, please. You are young and pretty, therefore far more ornamental than I should have wished. My son, who is at present at Paris, comes home every year for his vacations. He often brings young friends with him. I need not add that I would not tolerate any flirting on your part and——"

"Madame!" and such a flash of anger and wounded pride filled the governess' eye that Madame Boursier was abashed. For an instant Adriana did not speak; it was easy to see that she was battling with her anger and seeking to get it well under control before she began to speak. At last with a hauteur which surpassed all that the ex-manufacturer's wife had ever attempted, she said:

"I am not used to being insulted, and before we proceed further let me add that I will not stand it from you or any one. As long as I do nothing to infringe on the rights of propriety I forbid any one to even hint that I might. I am willing to do the work I have undertaken and I don't pretend or even desire to be treated as your equal, but one thing I do want is to be treated with proper respect. If you don't want to take me on those conditions we will let the matter drop and I will find some one who does."

This spirited reply quelled Madame Boursier and she stammered, at a loss what to say:

"I beg your pardon, Mademoiselle, I did not mean to offend you, but simply wished to give you some motherly advice. Your youth and your beauty might have turned the heads of those hot-headed youths and——"

"Very well, Madame," shortly interrupted Adriana, "I accept your excuses, only I hope that I will not have to again express my desire on the subject," and with the dignity of an offended queen Adriana swept past Madame Boursier and followed Berthe from the room.

"Well, the impertinence!" at last exclaimed Madame, exasperated by her involuntary submission before the governess. "If that woman takes on airs like that toward me I will make short work in dismissing her—the insolent hussy!"

"But, mother, your remark was insulting," protested Isabelle. "I would have felt as angry as she, had any one made that remark to me."

"Oh, with you it would be different. You are a lady and would naturally feel those things, but she—why, she's only a governess! Still, I suppose we'll have to put up with her for some time at least. We must absolutely have some one to look after you two girls and she has the very best references. Come, let us descend to the library. I want you to write a letter for me to Madame de Bois-Fleury to see if the letter of recommendation the woman gave me is genuine."

Meanwhile Berthe had conducted the governess to her room. At the door, just as the young girl was about to leave her, Adriana laid a detaining hand on her arm and in tones filled with a hidden sorrow seeking to find expression, said:

"My dear child, though a few moments ago I seemed to repulse your offer of friendship, it was not that I was not grateful for the offer, but because I remembered that for the present at least you were Mademoiselle Boursier and that I was only your governess. Still, my child, if in spite of that, you find in your heart the desire to love me a little, do so, dear, for I have far more need of love than of money."

And without giving Berthe time to recover from her surprise, the governess had entered her room and closed the door.

CHAPTER III.

MADAME DE BOIS-FLEURY.

A month later Madame Boursier was seated alone in the drawing-room waiting for the carriage which in half an hour was to take her daughters and herself for their daily drive. She was thinking of the governess, a thing which she often did of late and which surprised her greatly, since this was the first time she had given a second thought to so inferior a being as her daughters' instructor.

But Adriana Doban had such a strong personality that no one could pass by her with indifference. Besides, a weak, vain woman like Madame Boursier would naturally feel more the magnetism of the other's strength, coupled to which was the inborn elegance and perfect good breeding of the lady.

The improvement in her daughters' behavior was almost marvellous in its rapidity, and she was gratified to see that already they had acquired that subtle, indefinable something which marks out even to the casual observer the gentlewoman. She had long felt that this was the one thing they lacked and that, in spite of their millions, they might always lack. Therefore, what had not been her surprise, when only a few days after the arrival of the new governess, she had begun to notice in both of her daughters that nicety of manner which had been at once her despair and her envy when chance brought her in contact with ladies of rank.

When she questioned her elder daughter about the change, Isabelle had laughed as she answered:

"Mademoiselle Doban has such a queer system for the teaching of deportment and etiquette. All her instructions are given on the violin."

"On the violin? I don't understand!" exclaimed Madame Boursier in surprise.

"Yes, on the violin. She has a tone by which we learn to walk with grace, a prolonged note at which we bow and so on with the different motions one must go through to enter or to leave a drawing-room, to take a seat gracefully, or to cross a room without embarrassment. Come up tomorrow morning at ten and you can see for yourself."

Full of curiosity, Madame Boursier did not fail to accept her daughter's invitation, and the next morning she was present when the new governess gave her daily lesson in deportment to her two charges.

Seated at the farther end of the room with her violin posed gracefully on her shoulder, Adriana requested Isabelle to step out into the hall and at a given signal—a note in crescendo—to enter the room as though it were filled with a select company. She now began to play, and at the note indicated the young girl stepped into the room and walked toward her mother, her footsteps seeming to glide with the notes of the violin and the melody from the instrument seeming to find expression in the undulating grace of the steps. When Isabelle was within a few feet of her mother, a prolonged, descending note from the violin caused her to bow with all the flourished elegance Madame Boursier had so often noticed in women of rank.

Madame was so astonished by this unusual performance that she turned to the governess with the exclamation:

"Where did you learn that system, Mademoiselle? It is remarkable."

"That, Madame, is the way the young ladies of the French nobility are taught ease of manner and elegance in their walk. The melody which accompanies these exercises gets so deeply impressed upon the mind that in after life, as we walk, its sound regulates our steps and gives to our slightest movements the slow grace of its harmony."

"You speak as though you belonged to the nobility, Mademoiselle," remarked Madame Boursier somewhat piqued that the governess should dare class herself with the noblest daughters of France.

Adriana indulged in a smile of contemptuous irony, then replied as she motioned Berthe to take her sister's place in the hall:

"I belong to the class of women who have learned to walk and move to the sound of music, Madame, but with me the knowledge was gained, not to shine in the social world, but rather that I might impart it to future pupils."

Then taking up her violin she began to play anew and Berthe, with less grace, perhaps, than her sister, but with none of her former briskness of manner, went through the same exercise as Isabelle. When this was finished Madame Boursier turned her delighted face to the governess and asked:

"Do you think, Mademoiselle, that my younger daughter will ever acquire the grace and repose of manner which is so natural with her sister?"

"She most certainly shall," warmly replied Adriana as she cast an affectionate glance toward her younger pupil. "Mademoiselle Berthe is at a most trying age. She no longer is a child nor yet is she a young lady. Her body is overgrown and the frame which five years from now will make her a stately, queenly woman, is today in the way, making her self-conscious and giving to her movements a certain awkwardness, which, in the course of a few months, will have changed into perfect grace and ease of manner. You will be surprised, Madame, a year from now at the change which will have come over Mademoiselle."

It was of this conversation and mostly of the last remark of which Madame Boursier was thinking as she waited for the carriage. A few moments before Berthe had entered the room and the remarkable improvement which had already taken place in the young girl, not only in her walk and gestures, but also in the tones of the voice, which had none of the boisterous ring of old, was evident.

Suddenly Madame Boursier was called out of her reverie by a knock at the door, followed by the entry of a servant bearing on a gold platter a square of bristol. She took up the card with a somewhat annoyed gesture, but at the sight of the name which greeted her eyes, her face turned first pale, then flushed scarlet with pleasure. The name was that of Madame de Bois-Fleury, that is, it represented the oldest nobility of France, such as never before had honored with their presence the home of the ex-manufacturer of Lyon.

"Baptiste," said Madame, swelling her throat in excess of her pride, "you may admit Madame la Duchesse de Bois-Fleury. I am always at home for such callers and am surprised that you should have kept Madame la Duchesse waiting in the hall."

The servant hastened to retire and Madame Boursier, with a rapidly beating heart, rose to greet the visitor, whom Baptiste was now announcing in his most pompous voice:

"Madame la Duchesse de Bois-Fleury."

The person thus announced advanced slowly into the room with that easy assurance, the secret of which Madame now knew but could not acquire. Her dress, of costly simplicity, was severe in cut and sober in color, nothing like the gorgeous gowns worn by Madame Boursier in and out of season. Her face was concealed by a heavy veil and the first impression on beholding her was the same as that produced by the young governess when she had entered this very room a month before.

Madame Boursier advanced with great deference toward her visitor and with a low bow said in her most servile tones:

"Madame la Duchesse cannot guess the honor I feel to have her in my home."

The visitor bowed and extended her hand, saying:

"I have the pleasure of speaking to Madame Boursier, then?"

Madame Boursier stammered her reply and more embarrassed than she had ever been before she offered a seat to her visitor, while her eager eyes sought to penetrate beneath the veil which so completely concealed the features.

Madame de Bois-Fleury took the offered seat, then for a few seconds silence fell between the two. She at last turned to Madame Boursier with the question:

"You hired a new governess about a month ago, did you not, Madame?"

This question put Madame Boursier at her ease at once, since this was a subject on which she knew she could talk with her distinguished visitor.

"Oh, yes," she cried with great eagerness, "that dear Mademoiselle Doban whom I hired after reading your letter. She is indeed a treasure and I don't know how to express my gratitude for——"

But in spite of her good breeding, pushed onward by an unexplainable emotion, Madame de Bois-Fleury interrupted, a sudden excitement marring the usual clearness of her voice:

"Yes, yes, I know. I also answered your letter of inquiry addressed to me after you had hired her. But she, oh, tell me, is she contented? Does she seem happy? I am dying for news and had I dared I would have come sooner, but—" She paused abruptly and cast an embarrassed glance at the astonished face of her listener.

Madame Boursier was lost in surprise. The emotion and evident love betrayed by the Duchesse's words and manner seemed so out of keeping with the cause which gave it rise. More than ever she cursed the veil which concealed the face and which, in this case, she could not order removed as she had done with the governess. But she managed, in spite of her astonishment, to reply:

"Mademoiselle Doban seems contented, but I don't think she is happy; there always rests a deep sadness on the face which nothing has the power to efface. I judged from this, though I never asked her, that she must have lost some one, she is always in black."

"Yes, yes, you're right," hastened to exclaim Madame de Bois-Fleury, "she is in mourning—her—her father or her—her—brother—I don't remember which—to whom she was greatly attached—that—that was the reason why I—I was so very anxious about her."

The face beneath the veil was crimson and the utterance embarrassed. Madame Boursier was lost in wonder. Was this the much boasted of self-possession of the gentlewomen? Besides, why this emotion, why that hesitation, that embarrassment? But Madame de Bois-Fleury did not give her time to reflect much on these vexed questions, for she hastened to ask:

"Could I not see—Mademoiselle Doban? I would be grateful to you if you could spare her for a few minutes."

"Most certainly. I will ring and have her descend."

"Please don't. Let me go up to her, let me see her alone for a few moments," and a strange nervousness shook the visitor and caused her hands to tremble on her lap.

More mystified than ever, Madame Boursier complied with her visitor's request and took the trouble to conduct her herself to the schoolroom. As they reached the door, Isabelle and Berthe, dressed for the afternoon ride, stepped out. Madame Boursier introduced her daughters to the visitor, and after telling them to wait for her in the drawing-room below, she opened the door and allowed Madame de Bois-Fleury to proceed her into the large apartment which served as schoolroom.

Adriana had her back turned to the door and did not turn at the sound the two women made in entering. She was standing by the window, her eyes fixed afar on the band of blue sky and the tops of the trees in a nearby park, on which the breath of early spring had cast a veil of green.

Madame Boursier was about to call the governess' attention, but Madame de Bois-Fleury, recovering somewhat from the powerful emotion that for a second had left her speechless, called softly:

"Adriana!"

A thunderclap falling at her feet would not have produced a more startling effect upon the governess than that soft, almost pleading voice. She turned, her face suddenly livid, her eyes wild and staring, her body swaying as though about to fall.

Madame de Bois-Fleury did not wait to see more, for with a smothered cry, she rushed to the trembling woman and clasping her in her arms, murmured in broken accents:

"Pardon my coming, Adriana, but I could not remain away any longer."

Adriana had recovered from her emotion and in tones so low that Madame Boursier could not catch the spoken words, said hurriedly:

"Whatever you do, Marguerite, don't let her see your face." Then aloud to Madame Boursier, who had remained a mute but surprised witness of the scene: "Madame de Bois-Fleury always had the kindness to treat me as an equal, and during the time I had the happiness of being her governess we were more like sisters than like instructor and pupil. Her greeting just now is but an added proof of the great love she still has for me."

Such unexplainable emotion filled the young duchesse that, feeling her strength leaving her, she sank upon a divan while Madame Boursier remained by the open door, undecided what to do, too surprised to either speak or move.

Adriana hesitated an instant, then seeing that Madame Boursier did not seem inclined to leave the room, said with the tone of authority which sometimes broke her haughty submission:

"Madame, this is, I believe, my hour of liberty, and I shall enjoy it doubly in tete-a-tete with my former pupil, with whom I have so many recollections in common."

Madame Boursier blushed at this delicate hint, and bowing to Madame de Bois-Fleury, said:

"I hope to see you again before you leave, Madame la Duchesse?"

"Certainly," answered Madame de Bois-Fleury.

Then, in spite of her devouring curiosity, Madame Boursier was forced to retire and leave the two young women alone.

Next week's Ledger will contain another installment of this extremely interesting story. Don't fail to continue reading this mysterious and dramatic narrative if you like entertainment; strange things are to happen. Are you a regular reader of the Ledger? If not, then permit us to enroll you as a subscriber. You will surely not regret it. If you would like our Camera or any six of our splendid patterns absolutely free then send in your subscription. For premium announcements see pages thirteen and fifteen.

Saving Him Trouble.

There is a waiter in a cafe in Richmond who is the acme of polite attention, endeavoring in every way to save his customers trouble. The other day a man came in who was sized up by John as probably a "little close," but the service was fully up to the usual standard. The bill came to 80 cents, and the man handed over a dollar bill.

John then proceeded to help the man into his coat.

"Where's my change?" the customer asked.

"Change, sah? Dar ain't none—dat was mah tip, tank yo', sah!" John said with a bow.

"But I hadn't given it to you," the man protested.

"Ob course not, sah. Ah wouldn't 'low you ter go ter all dat trouble, sah!" John said with another bow, and the man went out, looking a trifle dazed.

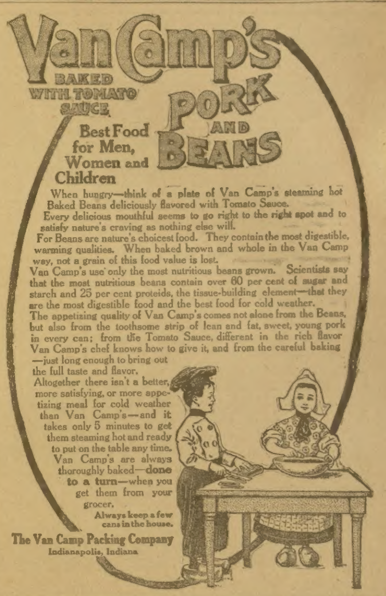
Forgot the Occasion.

At a banquet of clergymen recently the subject of absent-minded people was under discussion and yarns ancient and of recent origin were told by several speakers. It is seldom that ministers compete with one another to tell stories that tax the credulity of their hearers, but upon this occasion Rev. Dr. Dana, pastor of the Walnut street Presbyterian Church, carried off the honors.

"There was a physician whose absentmindedness was so marked that it often caused queer complications," said Dr. Dana. "Why, when he was married the minister told him to place the wedding ring on his bride's finger.

"He reached for her, felt her pulse, and as it was very naturally beating faster than normal, exclaimed: 'Let me see your tongue.' "

A back stoop may be all right—if it isn't on your shoulders.



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A FATAL FLIRTATION

BY GRANVILLE OSBORNE

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CHAPTER V.

"What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?" wondered Jennet Dare.

She was pacing up and down her room, with clenched hands and drawn, colorless face. She did not know how she had got through the usual routine of the evening, for Bert had passed from open defiance into a storm of tears, and finally to an outburst of penitence.

"Oh, I'm sorry—I'm sorry!" he wailed. "I wish I hadn't spoiled the pictures! I do love Uncle Serge. Oh, Miss Dare, mayn't I find some india-rubber and run downstairs to rub out the pencil-marks before he comes home?"

But Jennet was unyielding, and at last to her relief the child had sobbed himself to sleep, and the governess was free to seek the solitude she craved.

Up and down she paced long after the household had retired to rest, leaving a footman and two ladies' maids to keep their weary vigil until the carriage should return. She had no thought at first save a wild, fierce exultation. Her search was over at last, and Emmeline's destroyer was in her power. She only regretted that she had not retained sufficient presence of mind to bring away the two incriminating sketches instead of putting them back in the portfolio.

"I should have kept them," she told herself. And then, like a sudden inspiration, came the thought that she might go down to the room and secure them. Price, the footman, would be dozing in the butler's room, and the maids were keeping each other company in Mrs. Davy's dressing room. Jennet ceased her restless pacing, and, after a few moments of eager reflection, decided to make the attempt.

It was striking half-past twelve as she stepped out into the corridor. She was half-way down the passage when the wailing sobs that had arrested her attention on the evening of her arrival at the Hall again smote her ear. She had listened for them in vain for many a long, sad week, and had sometimes doubted the evidence of her senses, but now—now she knew that she had not been mistaken.

She sprang forward so suddenly that her candle slipped out of the stick and fell, extinguishing itself as it did so. But Jennet would not wait to replace it. She was well accustomed to finding her way to the landing without a light, and knew every step of the way. A few seconds later and she was leaning tremblingly over the balustrade.

There was no light below, save a dim reflection from the lamp that had been left burning in the vestibule, but she could just make out the wraith-like figure noiselessly gliding down the passage, and she heard a stifled moan.

"Emmeline!" she whispered. "Emmeline!"

There was a pause. Jennet's knees were shaking, and her heart grew numb with the mysterious fear that overwhelms the bravest amongst us when we seem about to penetrate beyond the limits of the visible world. She heard what sounded like a murmur of welcome—then came a rush of soft footsteps and an unearthly whisper.

"Come away—come away!" said a strange gasping voice.

And once again the figure turned and glided away so rapidly and noiselessly that before Jennet could move or speak it had disappeared, vanishing into the darkness.

Jennet followed it, stumbling down the wide, shallow stairs with a total disregard for her own safety.

"Ah—wait, wait!" she pleaded; but, though she thought she was speaking aloud, her voice was inaudible. As her foot touched the last step she fancied she heard the soft creak of a closing door, but she still pressed onward, feeling her way along the oak panels and whispering her broken entreaties.

Suddenly she caught her foot in something and stumbled, striking her head as she fell, and sinking unconscious on the floor. She lay there for nearly ten minutes absolutely motionless, her pale face upturned in the darkness. At the end of that time the baize door at the further end of the passage opened cautiously, and Mrs. Mellor appeared, candle in hand, wrapped in an old-fashioned chintz dressing-gown, and looking even smaller and more haggard than she did by day.

"I thought I heard a noise," she muttered, and then she saw the dark heap on the floor and gave a little gasp of dismay.

Jennet came to her senses a few minutes later, to find the housekeeper bending over her bathing her head. The governess had struck her forehead on a sharp edge of the cornice, but, though she still felt giddy and shaken, there was no real harm done.

The almost grotesque figure of the woman who was waiting upon her was the first thing that met Jennet's eyes, and she burst into a subdued paroxysm of hysterical laughter.

"You?" she exclaimed. "I thought—I thought——"

"I don't know what you thought, nor how you came here, miss, at this time of night,' said Mrs. Mellor severely. "But I'm sure you've no call to be wandering about, and I shall feel it my duty to speak to the master if it happens again."

"It won't happen again," said Jennet in a strange voice. "Mrs. Mellor, did you hear——"

"I heard you falling," interrupted the housekeeper, "and a fine noise you made! I was asleep, but it woke me, and I jumped up thinking something must have happened to Mr. Serge, or that there were thieves in the house. I scarcely dared come out, and I'm all of a tremble still."

Indeed she was shaking from head to foot and kept looking over her shoulder in a scared way.

"Have the goodness to light me upstairs, if you please," said Jennet haughtily. "I dropped my candle on the way."

Mrs. Mellor obeyed in silence.

"Be quick then, miss," she said, as Jennet paused to steady herself. And as she spoke the housekeeper looked over her shoulder again in the same furtive manner. As soon as the governess gained the top of the stairs Mrs. Mellor returned with all haste to her own quarters, locking the door behind her.

Jennet lay down on her bed. She meant to make the descent again and obtain the sketches, but she wanted time to collect herself and to recover from the effects of her fall. Strange to say, she did not feel so certain now as to the reality of the vision. She was almost ready to think she imagined the shadowy figure; she had been terribly excited, and the blow on her head had shaken her physically and seemed to have dulled her overstrung nerves.

"I must have been dreaming," she told herself. Presently she grew less dizzy and began to plan a second descent to Serge Arkloe's sitting-room, for she was determined to get hold of the sketches before she attempted to bring his sin home to him. She knew that the carriage would not be back for some hours, so she lay still for a few minutes longer lest Mrs. Mellor should be still on the alert—and the next thing she knew was that her candle was guttering in its socket and the gray dawn was creeping through her unclosed blinds. Sleep had overtaken her unawares, and the opportunity had passed. She had slept until nearly half-past four, the birds were beginning a drowsy twitter and the light grew stronger every moment.

Jennet wrung her hands in her vexation, and then springing up, she hurried to the door.

"I will go now," she thought. "They will surely be back by this time, and if I am caught I can frame some excuse."

She was still half-blinded by sleep and the effects of the blow on her head as she stole swiftly downstairs and along the Oak Passage which the cold gray dawn had robbed of its eerie appearance.

The sitting-room door was unlocked and Jennet entered. All was exactly as she had left it—the portfolio still lay on the table in the recess near the window. She opened it, and was sorting the contents with shaking fingers when, without an instant's warning, the French window on her left was noiselessly unlatched and Serge Arkloe himself stepped into the room. Jennet did not know that this was his usual mode of entrance when returning by the shrubbery, for his rooms all opened out on the veranda at the back of the house, and for once in her life she was too much startled to disguise her real feelings.

"You—you!" she gasped, shrinking away with a gesture of hatred from the astounded young man, who, for his part, scarcely recognized the quiet, precise governess in this fierced-eyed woman who confronted him unabashed. The morning dress that she wore was crumpled and covered with dust, and her dark hair had escaped from its fastening and fell thickly over her face. She pushed it back and stood with her hand pressed to her brow, her whole face and attitude so expressive in their loathing and disgust that Serge's first thought was that she must have been overtaken by sudden madness.

"You?" she repeated.

"Well—yes. It is my sitting-room, you know," said Serge. Directly he spoke Jennet began to recover herself, and with a supreme effort choked down the bitter words that rose to her lips. She burst into a passably natural laugh:

"Why, how you startled me, Mr. Arkloe!" she cried. "You will wonder what I am doing here, but I have stolen down on Bertie's behalf." And then she told him of the child's wanton mischief of the preceding day.

"I promised him to do what I could to rectify the damage," she said. "In fact, I came down here after you had all started to get possession of the damaged sketches, but the room was occupied, and my next attempt was even more unfortunate. I sleep very badly, and it occurred to me that I might occupy the midnight hours with my india-rubber and bread crumbs. But on my way down to secure the sketches I stumbled and fell, hurting myself rather badly and rousing Mrs. Mellor. I was so stunned and shaken that I lay down to recover, and dropped to sleep, and when I awoke about twenty minutes ago I found that the night was over and that if I intended to keep my word to Bert I must set to work on the sketches at once. I was just selecting them when you came in and startled me so terribly that I am afraid I was very rude.'

It was a plausible explanation, and as she spoke Jennet became so completely herself that Serge could almost have doubted the evidence of his senses.

"I am sorry I startled you,' he said gravely. "You must not trouble to rectify Herbert's mischief. The sketches are of very little value. I had no idea that the little chap possessed such a revengeful spirit."

Even as he spoke he replaced the sketches in the portfolio, closed it, and crossed the room to open the door for Jennet, who, after a moment's hesitation, passed quietly out of the room with bowed head and a wildly-beating heart.

"He suspects! He suspects!" she thought. "I would not press my advantage—but he cannot escape me now!"

Mrs. Davy and Gladys slept late that morning, breakfasting in their own rooms, and Serge was snatching a brief doze when about eight o'clock he received a hasty summons to Sir Maurice's room.

He found his brother looking frightfully ill and agitated. The Post had just arrived, bringing him a business letter of a disturbing character, which the baronet declared would necessitate Serge's immediate departure for London. Serge himself saw at once that his presence in town was inevitable, or rather that his absence might involve a pecuniary loss which Maurice could by no means afford.

"I suppose I must go," he said disconsolately.

"Of course, of course!" replied Sir Maurice, plucking feverishly at his counterpane and speaking in a hard, strained voice. "I can't stand this sort of worry. You'll make it all right, won't you, Serge?"

"I'll do my best," said the other. He saw that his brother was in no state to listen to the communication he had intended to make, for Jarvis was hovering uneasily outside the half-closed door, and it was impossible under the circumstances to hint at the reason of his distaste for the expedition.

"You will just catch the nine o'clock Express," said Mr. Maurice, with all the irritable impatience of an invalid. "The eleven would be too late. Don't come back until everything is satisfactorily settled."

"I shall be back tonight," said Serge, with more confidence than he felt, and he left the room. There was so much to do before his hurried departure that he had only time to scribble a few lines to Rose.

"So we must keep our secret until my return," he concluded, after describing his dilemma. "I shall walk up from the station, and if you should happen to be in the rectory copse between half-past six and seven I might turn aside to wish you good night. This delay is unbearable, my sweetheart, but you will meet me this evening, won't you. And, after all——"

"Uncle Serge!"

Serge glanced up with a start to see Bert standing by his side, with an unwontedly subdued look on his little face. It appeared that he wanted to confess his misdoings before his uncle's departure, but the attempt brought such floods of repentant tears that the man's heart was touched, and he forgave the boy on the spot.

"I do wish I could do something for you!" he sobbed. "Mayn't I post your letter?"

"It isn't to be posted," replied Serge. Then, as though struck by an idea, he took the lad's hand and went with him to the schoolroom where Jennet, seated at the breakfast table, awaited her pupil's appearance.

"Good morning, Miss Dare!" said Serge, in his frank, pleasant voice. I am going to ask you to do me a kindness."

"Certainly, Mr. Arkloe!" said Jennet.

"Bert has been confessing his misdeeds and is very anxious to make himself useful. So, as I want this note to be taken to the rectory as soon as possible, I thought you might perhaps allow him to run down with it after breakfast."

"We will both take it," said Jennet at once. "A walk before lessons today will do us no harm."

"I'd rather go by myself!" muttered Bert, under cover of his uncle's hurried acknowledgments.

"I'm immensely obliged to you. To tell you the truth, it is rather important, and—" Here he broke off with a laugh, adding, "In short, I want it delivered with as little delay as possible."

"It's for Miss Maple, isn't it?" asked Bert.

"It is." Something in Serge's voice and smile betrayed his secret so completely that Jennet knew it at once. Either Serge and Rose understood each other already or were on the eve of an engagement.

She took the rough gray envelope and slipped it into her pocket as the door closed upon Serge. The way was opening at last—the victim himself had suggested the instrument for his own undoing!

"How he loves her! How he loves her!" thought Jennet with a throb of bitter jealousy. "Did he speak in that tone of Emmeline, I wonder? Nine years ago! Nine years ago! And now he is caught in his own toils, and I have not waited in vain!"

She rose hastily.

"I will be back in a few minutes, Bert," she said.

Bert finished his porridge and helped himself to jam twice before his governess returned with a roll of papers in her hands.

"Is that one of Uncle Serge's sketches?" asked the child, in all innocence. "Have you been into the——"

find me. Your friend,

"Be silent and finish your breakfast!" cried Jennet so fiercely that for once in his life Bert was subdued.

It was nearly half-past nine before governess and pupil entered the rectory garden. Serge was speeding Londonwards, and Mrs Davy and Gladys were still blissfully ignorant of his departure. Rose, fresh and untired as the morning itself, was playing with Tatters on the lawn.

"We've brought you a letter," cried Bert, who adored the rector's pretty niece. But Jennet interposed.

"I've something to say to you, Miss Maple," she murmured, glancing at the child. Rose took the hint at once.

"Run up to the orchard, my darling," she said. "You will find the rector there."

"Why doesn't she give you Uncle Serge's letter?" asked Bert as he obeyed.

In an instant Rose's fair face was aflame, and she held out her hand, looking half shyly into her visitor's face.

Jennet placed the envelope in the little fingers.

"You want me to go now!" she said. "You want to read your love letter alone. It is the first you have ever had perhaps—but it is not the first he has written!"

Her voice and manner were so terrible in their tragic intensity that Rose at once fell under the spell. Her blue eyes dilated with terror and her lips quivered piteously.

"What do you mean?" she whispered. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"I'm speaking of Serge Arkloe!" replied Jennet. "Of the man who broke the heart of a girl as young and beautiful as you, Miss Maple, nine years ago—who stole her innocent love and then flung her aside to die!"

"You are mad! Hush, hush! Oh, pray, hush!" cried Rose.

"I am not mad," said Jennet quietly. "I am speaking the truth—and you know it! The girl was my sister—my dear, my most unhappy sister. Now, listen, and I will tell you all."

She placed her arm around Rose as she spoke and drew her to a secluded seat behind a clump of laurels. Even her fierce hatred was not proof against the pitiful change in the fair young face; but, as she told her story, it was Emmeline alone of whom Jennet thought, and each word seemed pregnant with the pent-up agony of years.

Rose listened very quietly. She looked at the sketches, the half-finished outline and the mounted duplicate, both bearing the initials. She knew all about old Mr. Donald's unexpected succession to the title and the change of name that it had involved. There was no discrepancy in Jennet's story, neither were there any absolute proofs as to its truth, but Rose did not doubt it for an instant. Her face looked almost old when Jennet ceased speaking, but she made no outcry of anger or despair.

The governess rose to her feet.

"So now you know all!" she said. "If you still love him—if you can still care for him—" She broke off, thrilling from head to foot with triumph.

Rose had opened her lips to reply, but speech failed her. She took Serge's unopened letter and tore it, slowly and deliberately, into a thousand pieces.

"I—I—" she began, but at that moment a startling interruption occurred. A man came running bareheaded along the shrubbery path with dismay written on every line of his grizzled old face.

"What is it, Holland?" asked Rose, recognizing the parish clerk. "Not my uncle?"

"No, not the rector—'tis little master!" panted Holland, who seemed beside himself. "He's lyin' dyin' on th' bell-ringer's floor, and it's all my fault for lettin' him into th' church!"

Jennet seized Rose's hand and they ran to the church together, for everything else was forgotten in the moment's terror.

Bert, with his talent for mischief, had reached the climax at last. Failing to discover the rector, he had wandered into the vestry, where Holland was busy, and thence into the church, where, finding the door of the bell-ringer's room unlocked, he had climbed up the steep, twisting stone staircase, missed his footing and fallen heavily down.

The boy was not unconscious, but shrieked when the others touched him and clung to Rose convulsively. They dared not move him until the doctor arrived; then they carried him slowly back to the Hall, scarcely knowing what to hope. Rose walked beside the little procession, with the child's hand still clasped in her own. It was she who helped the housekeeper undress Bert, and who soothed and prepared the poor little boy for the doctor's examination. Bert, half-crazy with pain and terror, shrieked when his governess approached him, and would tolerate no one but Rose.

"You will stay with him?" asked the doctor in an undertone. "There is some injury to the spine, I fear, and everything depends upon keeping him quiet. If you leave him I cannot answer for the consequences. I have telegraphed for nurses, but even when they arrive you must be at hand in case he asks for you."

"I—I must go home," faltered Rose, but the doctor looked at her with stern surprise

"You don't understand," he said. "It is a matter of life and death. You must stay!"

So Rose stayed.

The carriage that brought the nurses conveyed Mrs Davy and Miss Heatherton to the station. Rose, standing at the window of Bert's room, saw them drive away, and remembered with a bitter little smile that twenty-four hours before she had been jealous of Gladys Heatherton.

The day passed slowly. Jennet was paying the penalty of her disturbed night and repeated agitation with a severe headache, and spent the greater part of the time on her bed. Her vengeance was at work at last, and yet she was not conscious of any relief.

Rose was invaluable. The nurse on duty could do nothing for Bert without her presence.

"They often take fancies like that," she said, when she heard that the girl was not related to the patient. "And, in this case, he must be humored as far as possible. So you may give him the medicine, miss. I'll show you how."

Towards evening Bertie dropped into an uneasy sleep, and Rose was about to take refuge in the room that had been prepared for her when Jarvis himself appeared, begging her to go to Sir Maurice.

"My master is in a terrible state, miss," he said. "He thinks you will give him trustworthy information, and he bade me to entreat you to give him five minutes when you could be spared. Indeed, miss, this suspense is very bad for him."

Rose could not refuse. Mrs. Talbot had broken down, and was in bed with one of her worst bronchial attacks, and Sir Maurice had been dependent on the servants for tidings.

The baronet was dressed and lying on his couch, but he looked years older than he had done on the previous night. Jarvis, who was very uneasy, asked Rose to be as cheerful as possible.

"My poor little boy!" mutterd Sir Maurice heavily, when she had told her faltering tale. "I little thought—but Heaven knows, it is all for the best——"

"He may recover," whispered Rose, dismayed by this outbreak.

"He will die," was the gloomy response, and then, in obedience to a sign from Jarvis, Rose stole from the room. She was walking slowly down the passage when suddenly, without any warning, Serge stood before her.

There was no outcry of welcome or dismay, but as their glances met each commented inwardly on the other's unnatural restraint. It was so different from the meeting that they had anticipated.

"He knows—he knows that I know!" thought Rose, and the last faint ray of hope darkened into despair.

"She sees that I have heard," commented Serge. But it was Rose who broke the silence.

"There is no need to say anything," she murmured. "We—I—made a mistake last night——"

"Don't distress yourself," he interrupted. "I assure you I quite understand. Explanations are unnecessary."

Rose grew pale to her lips.

"I agree with you; they are quite unnecessary," she murmured, and passed on haughtily.

Neither of the lovers noticed Jennet Dare, who had dragged herself from her bed and was on her way to cool her throbbing head in the open air. But she witnessed the whole of the little scene, and her eyes flashed with triumph as Serge brushed past her hastily.

"So far, so good," she thought. "He is feeling the effect of her displeasure; tonight I will tell him why."

It was a close, oppressive evening, with thunder rumbling ominously in the distance and a yellow haze veiling the sky. Serge was obliged to put his own troubles aside and go to his brother's room, for Jarvis was seriously alarmed about his master, who had just recovered from a bad heart attack brought on by his short interview with Rose.

"I don't like his looks, sir," whispered the man to Serge. "When the doctor comes again to Master Bert it would be well for him to see Sir Maurice, too."

"Is that you, Serge?" questioned the invalid. "You have heard that the child is—dying?"

"Oh, it is not so bad as that, sir," said Jarvis, but Serge, who had just received an unfavorable opinion from the nurse, held his peace.

"He is dying," persisted Sir Maurice, "and so am I. You remember what we were speaking about the other night?" he added, looking up at his brother with dim, anxious eyes.

Serge nodded.

"It is all right," he said gently. "I found everything just as you described it. Your wishes shall be carried out—I will go myself. It is the least we can do."

"You always were honorable, old fellow," said Sir Maurice, with a flash of his old ironic spirit. "But in this case you're intervention comes some years too late! Say that I have never forgotten——"

"I know, I know," interrupted the younger man. "Don't agitate yourself by going all over it again. Now I must call Jarvis, for you are growing faint."

Doctor Black was anxiously looked for that evening. He gave a somewhat more cheering report of Bert, but admitted that the shock caused by the boy's accident had hastened his father's end, and that in all probability the baronet would not live through the night.

"I shall remain here for some hours," he said. "I have sent my dog-cart away, for I fancy we are in for an uncommonly heavy storm."

It was scarcely eight o'clock, but already the sky had darkened into a lurid twilight, and great masses of clouds were massing slowly over the hills. An occasional growl of thunder and the absolute silence of the birds seemed to herald the slow approach of the storm. Rose, sitting beside Bertie's bed, shuddered as the shadows fell between herself and the little white face. A strange, indefinable foreboding oppressed her, and, apart from her own private griefs, she was increasingly conscious of some terrible impending crisis.

CHAPTER VI.

About half an hour before midnight Serge and the doctor came noiselessly out of Sir Maurice's room. The storm was at its heights and raging furiously, but it no longer had power to disturb the quiet figure on the bed. Sir Maurice was dead; the end had been painless and even more sudden than the doctor's anticipations.

"I will go to the child now," he murmured, as they stood together in the passage.

Serge nodded.

"Come down to my room afterwards and give me your report," he said, turning away. He looked so broken down and dispirited that Doctor Black felt almost surprised.

"To be sure, Sir Maurice was his brother, but there are brothers and brothers, and I never fancied there was much love lost between those two," commented the shrewd little man as he betook himself to Bert. His surmise was perfectly correct, and, though Serge grieved sincerely for the brother cut off in the prime of his manhood, he was conscious all the time of a stronger and more personal grief.

There had been no time for thought since he met Rose, nearly five hours before, but her face was clear and distinct before his mental gaze as he sank into his chair, and her voice still rang in his ears.

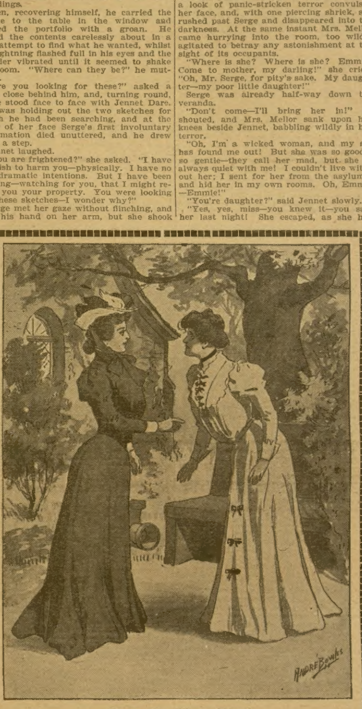
"I made a mistake last night," he repeated half aloud. The room was ablaze with lightning, for, in the general confusion, the servant had omitted to close the blinds. The candle that Serge had brought down with him glimmered feebly where he set it down, and for some minutes he sat still, absolutely unconscious of his surroundings.

Then, recovering himself, he carried the candle to the table in the window and opened the portfolio with a groan. He tossed the contents carelessly about in a vain attempt to find what he wanted, whilst the lightning flashed full in his eyes and the thunder vibrated until it seemed to shake the room. "Where can they be?" he muttered.

"Are you looking for these?" asked a voice close behind him, and, turning round, Serge stood face to face with Jennet Dare. She was holding out the two sketches for which he had been searching, and at the sight of her face Serge's first involuntary exclamation died unuttered, and he drew back a step.

Jennet laughed.

"You are frightened?" she asked. "I have no wish to harm you—physically. I have no melodramatic intentions. But I have been waiting—watching for you, that I might return you your property. You were looking for these sketches—I wonder why?"



"I'm speaking of Serge Arkloe."

Serge met her gaze without flinching, and laid his hand on her arm, but she shook him off with a shudder and continued, no longer attempting to restrain her passion. "Look—look!" she cried, pointing to the sketch in her shaking hand. "Do you remember drawing this—and this?" She showed the rough outline that she had treasured for so many years. "Ah, you cannot deny it! You need not attempt to deny it! I am Emmeline Dare's sister, and tonight I have taken my revenge upon you for your share in her cruel death nine years ago. Nine years ago! I have waited all that time, but the hour has come at last!"

"Are you mad?" asked the man, in a voice of such utter and complete amazement that the woman burst into a taunting laugh.

"Ah, you're memory is short—very short!" she retorted. "But Rose Maple knows my story, and she does not think me mad!"

"Rose—Rose knows? Woman, what do you mean?"

"I thought that would rouse you," said Jennet.

Serge turned away abruptly, and, regardless of the storm, unfastened the long French window that opened upon the veranda.

The pity that he might have felt for this white-lipped, trembling creature, the victim of her own wild passion, had become bitter loathing and disgust, and his one instinct was to escape from her presence. As his foot crossed the threshold, however, a sudden impulse brought him back into the room.

Jennet Dare had sunk down upon the chair she had vacated, but at the sound of his voice she raised her head.

"You are mistaken," said Serge distinctly. "I never saw your sister. I——"

He broke off, glancing over his shoulder in unconscious obedience to a sudden, inexplicable flash of triumph in the other's ashen face.

"There! there!" she gasped, pointing with shaking fingers towards the door that she had left half-open.

Some one was coming noiselessly through the doorway—a slender, girlish figure, draped in white, with long, fair hair, unbound, and strange, unseeing blue eyes shining like stars in the deathly pale face.

"Emmeline!" whispered Jennet. Then, raising her voice, "Emmeline, speak!"

The vision paused irresolute, framed in a sudden glare of lightning. Then, as the thunder pealed through the open window, a look of panic-stricken terror convulsed her face, and, with one piercing shriek, she rushed past Serge and disappeared into the darkness. At the same instant Mrs. Mellor came hurrying into the room, too wildly agitated to betray any astonishment at the sight of its occupants.

"Where is she? Where is she? Emmie! Come to mother, my darling!" she cried. "Oh, Mr. Serge, for pity's sake. My daughter—my poor little daughter!"

Serge was already half-way down the veranda.

"Don't come—I'll bring her in!" he shouted, and Mrs. Mellor sank upon her knees beside Jennet, babbling wildly in her terror.

"Oh, I'm a wicked woman, and my sin has found me out! But she was so good—so gentle—they call her mad, but she is always quiet with me! I couldn't live without her; I sent for her from the asylum—and hid her in my own rooms. Oh, Emmie—Emmie!"

"You're daughter?" said Jennet slowly.

"Yes, yes, miss—you knew it—you saw her last night! She escaped, as she has done once or twice before, and wandered into the Oak Passage. And tonight they called me to Sir Maurice, and I must have forgotten to take the key——"

She went rambling on, half beside herself, shrieking and trembling at each peal of thunder. But Jennet put her aside and walked steadily to the window.

She felt as though she were suffocating and the storm was nothing to her in comparison with her craving for air. She stepped out upon the veranda into the full blaze of the lightning, which seemed to be darting its fiery tongues direct from the clouds upon that side of the house.

Suddenly Serge sprang past her, carrying an inanimate burden in his arms.

"She has only fainted," he said to the sobbing mother. "Take her back to your room. I will inquire into this tomorrow."

The woman obeyed, and, still trembling and moaning, helped her daughter away.

Then Serge returned to the motionless figure on the veranda. The storm was at its height; the clouds seemed to be discharging their artillery exactly overhead, but Jennet stood there, unmoved by the tumult and the glare, bending forward and gazing straight before her with blank, unseeing gaze.

"Miss Dare, you must come in—this is not safe!" cried Serge.

The woman took no notice, but as he touched her shoulder she shrank away from him with a violent shudder.

"Go! Leave me alone!" she cried.

"I cannot!" he replied, and even as he spoke a dazzle of blue-forked lightning lit up the earth and sky and a roar like a hundred cannons seemed to shake the house to its very foundations. It was succeeded by a lull, and, whilst the thunder still vibrated in the distance, Serge Arkole spoke again:

"Indeed you are mistaken," he said. "I never saw your sister. Come back—come into the house, for it is not safe to stand here, and I will explain——"

"Explain!" she cried with a terrible laugh. "I need no explanations from you, Serge Arkloe—once Serge Herbert Donald—and ever liar and coward!"

She was facing him as she spoke, and her speech rang out shrilly through the unnatural stillness, but even as the last words passed her lips the veranda and its occupants were enveloped in a sheet of living flame—a flame that brought with it what seemed to the pair to be the awful crack of doom.

* * * * * * * * *

When, nearly half an hour later, Serge Arkloe struggled slowly back to life he was lying on his own bed, with Doctor Black and Jarvis in attendance. They told him that the veranda had been struck, and that he had been slightly stunned by the shock, but was recovering rapidly now.

"And Miss Dare—what of her?" he cried anxiously. There was an ominous silence. "Not hurt? Good Heavens! Not killed?" he gasped, rising on his elbow.

"No, no—lie down now, lie down!" said the doctor soothingly. "She won't die—no fear of that now—but she has had an awful shock, and I am afraid her eyes are injured."

The storm was over, and morning broke with its watery sunshine and a chilly breeze over a scene of almost unparalleled disaster. Every one agreed that there had not been such a tempest for years, and the trouble at the Hall received far less notice than it would otherwise have done.

Serge felt absurdly shaken and weak, but he could not afford to give in, for the household was completely disorganized. Bertie still lived, and the doctors thought he might linger for some days, but they admitted now that the injuries to head and spine must prove fatal in the end.

The boy was now too drowsy to recognize his attendants, and Rose did not hesitate to leave him to the nurse and betake herself to the rectory, to see how things were going in her absence.

"But I must go back," she told the rector. "They think he will be conscious towards the end, and he may ask for me."

"You look very tired, dear child," said the gentle old rector; but he did not attempt to dissuade his niece, and indeed walked part of the way back with her. Rose was glad when he left her at the Lodge gates. She wanted to be alone, to have time to think, so she took the shrubbery path and wandered aimlessly along until she discovered that she was crying.

"What a baby I am!" she thought impatiently. "I have made up my mind to forget him, and I will do it! He has behaved shamefully; he—ah, there he is!"

She gave a little gasp and turned her tear-stained face away as Serge came towards her, still looking very white and tired, but with a resolute expression on his face.

"Yes, I have followed you," he said. "I have something to say to you. I see that my presence distresses you, but I will be as brief as possible. I find we were at cross-purposes yesterday, and that you were accusing me of conduct that—that—" He broke off, afraid of expressing himself too strongly, and glanced down at the girl's frightened face, now turned full upon him.

"I never saw Miss Dare's sister," he said simply; "I never even heard her name until two or three days ago, when my brother told me her story."

"Your brother?" gasped Rose.

Serge nodded. There was a dull, shame-stricken flush upon his face.

"I think you understand," he said. "Will you listen to my explanation? Nine years ago, just before my father succeeded to the baronetcy, my brother Maurice—or Bertie, as we called him then—spent a few weeks sketching amongst the Derbyshire Moors. Herbert, by the way, is a family name with us—I am Serge Herbert Donald, and he was Herbert Maurice; but as you know, we dropped the Donald when our father changed his surname, and Bertie then became known as Maurice. It all happened within a week or so of his return from that sketching expedition, and he was so much taken up just then with the change in his prospects that he heard nothing of the sad accident on the moors."

"Ah!" murmured Rose involuntarily.

"Maurice knew that he had treated Miss Dare very badly," continued Serge; "but the whole episode was so painful that he wished to forget it, and succeeded so well that even the fact of his child's governess bearing the same surname did not recall poor Emmeline to his memory."

"Then how——"

"It was the approach of death that aroused his conscience," said Serge. "Some days ago he told me the story and asked

(Continued on page eleven.)

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Invention is the stepmother of trusts.

Some queer birds roost in family trees.

An easy way to get money is to inherit it.

Sharp men know that cutting remarks do not pay.

Many a small boy grows up to be a little big man.

There are numerous toll gates on the road to success.

You can't get the best of some men—they haven't any.

When a tall man is broke that's the long and short of it.

There's a lot of brass in the composition of a gilded youth.

Life is no joke to the chap who is forced to live by his wits.

Study of theatrical stars has nothing to do with astronomy.

Some people are not much for looks until they begin to rubber.

Some people must get awfully tired listening to their own talk.

Many a woman who looks like an angel forgets to act like one.

In relating his experiences a man usually poses as his own hero.

Success has made a fool of many an otherwise sensible man.

Few people are wise enough to utilize second-hand experience.

It's so much easier to tell a lie than it is to make people believe it.

It's tough even on the six-footer when he has one foot in the grave.

Convince a man that he is a fool if you would make an enemy of him.

After a man gets about so drunk he thinks other people think he isn't.

When a man has no religion of his own he is apt to hide behind his wife's.

A bank is run on a cash basis—and occasionally a cashier runs that way also.

Most people seem to enjoy coming out of a church more than they do going in.

Any woman can make a dollar go so far that her husband will never see it again.

People are affiliated with temporary insanity when their brains are on a vacation.

Even the female with the bargain-hunting mania draws the line at a cheap-looking man.

No, *Cordelia*, a man doesn't necessarily have paint in his eyes when he is color blind.

Some people, after expressing the wish to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, let it go at that.

THE UNWRITTEN LAW;

OR

The Hand of Retribution.

By MAJOR ALBION F. GRANT, author of "Deuce of Diamonds," "The Stolen Millions," "The Third Woman."

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW RETREAT.

It was true that Weston had again escaped from the snares of the dread Black Puma and that he owed his salvation to La Death, the girl from Attacao.

The Reptile of the Amazon, blacklisted as she was by the Puma, had no fears of its powers. She had faced the threats of that order before and they had failed to drive her from Rio.

When she had dragged Weston from the circular prison where, but for her opportune arrival, he would have died in the coils of the anaconda she took him to a secret place in the city and there set about to nurse him back to life. The last struggles of the monster reptile had well-nigh finished the American.

La Death was secretive.

She knew that the escape of their victim would start the Black Puma again on his trail and she bent all her energies to the task of shielding him from its fangs.

Of course she communicated her work to Kitty and the two women resolved to work together and thus rescue Weston from the common foe.

It was the dread fever that followed Weston's escape that almost drove the arrow of despair into Kitty's heart.

Would he recover, if ever, in time to balk the efforts of the enemies in the United States? The papers that arrived with each mail acquainted the American girl with the progress of the Hector Knight case and increased her apprehension.

One night La Death came to the room of her friend and exhibited a countenance seamed with subdued excitement.

"What is it?" demanded Kitty.

"They have found him out."

"What, discovered his hiding place?" and the face of Kitty Burton went pale.

"Yes. They have found where we have hidden him."

"Then he must go from there. Do you not know another place, La Death?"

"There are many places in Rio, but in which one would he be entirely safe from the eyes of the Puma?"

"We must not give up now. The time is near at hand when we must strike and turn the tables against those in the United States. They are going to free Hector Knight and you——"

La Death put out her hand and it fell lightly upon Kitty's arm.

"I am harboring my strength to go," said the girl from the jungles. "I am praying every day for strength and if it comes I will be there. But the American first."

"Yes, yes!" cried Kitty. "We must save him."

The girl from Attacao went away. She stole through the dark to the little house where she had concealed Weston and let herself in by a secret way.

She found the young man sitting up in bed and she bent over him and looked for a moment into the face which was now white, for thus the fever had left him, and his strength was not much better than a child's.

"What is the news?" asked the American. "You have come from Kitty?"

La Death nodded.

"And she sent me the latest papers?"

The girl took some papers from her bosom and handed them to Weston. Then she brought the lamp closer while he read them in silence.

"I must get well!" said he, looking up into her face. "The hour draws near and the next steamer will soon clear from this port for home. I must go and face them with the proof I have obtained here."

"But you cannot go now," said the dark-faced girl softly, yet with firmness. "You must wait with the rest of us."

"But you see they are going to open the trial soon, and if we are not there Kendall Gray will be unavenged."

"I see, senor, but you——"

Just then there came to the practiced ears of the girl a slight noise that caused her to fall back and listen.

Weston's eyes followed her quickly and did not lose sight of her for a moment.

She went over to the door and touched it with her ear as she listened intently.

By and by she came back to the couch and looked down into Weston's anxious face.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The scent of the Puma."

"Again?"

Weston pulled himself together with the energy of one who had reached the last hour or the last ditch.

His sunken eyes grew larger and his hand reached beneath the hot pillows of his couch and gripped something that lay there.

"Where are they?" said he.

"It is the spy of the Puma," responded La Death. "It is the foot of the tracker."

"Let him in. Let us have done with him at once."

The girl shook her head.

Weston continued to watch her and at last saw her creep back from the door and stand for a moment in the middle of the room.

"How strong is the senor now?" she asked.

"Strong enough to meet that spy," was the answer.

"Can he get up?"

Weston answered that question by rising from the cot and standing erect.

"Good!" cried La Death with a smile. "Then we can go."

"Whither, girl?"

"To the new den."

With the revolver in his hand Weston tottered across the room, loath to confess his weakness, but willing to desert the place if that would save him from those who sought his life.

La Death helped to steady him a little and the two moved from the place. It was a dark alley-like way where they found themselves a few moments later.

The air, though warm, fanned Weston's face with the keenest delight to him.

He was out of the old place at last! He was again fleeing from the fangs of the Puma and he hoped yet to pay the villains back.

Half an hour later Weston sat in a chair in another house. It was a better place than where he had been last and he felt his old strength coming back.

La Death had left him after seeing that he was comfortable, and he was thinking of the coming hours of vengeance.

The lights in the room were low and he saw many shadows along the wall. But he was safe there, for La Death had said that the place was the abode of a friend whom she could trust, and he felt more at his ease than he had felt for days.

All at once he heard a little sound like footsteps in the adjoining room. Perhaps La Death had come back.

The revolver was within reach for La Death had placed it there, and with his eyes fastened on the door he waited for it to open.

Weston had resolved to brook no enemy in that house. He had made up his mind that he would defend it to the last extremity and he would not quail. The hour for cowardice had never entered his heart. He had mapped out his route to revenge and not all the dark-skinned rascals of the tropics should balk him.

The door seemed a long while opening. The silence after the slight noise was torture to the young American.

At last, however, the door opened. Weston's hand was at the butt of the weapon and his eyes were on the alert.

Nothing came in but a puff of air.

Yet some human agency had opened the door, as Weston knew, and he started from the chair.

Suddenly he halted and craned his neck forward.

In the other room there was a streak of light and he caught sight of something that lay on the floor.

"That's devilish queer," thought the American. "I heard some one in yon room——"

He went forward and then stopped at the threshold.

The object on the floor moved and a pair of glassy eyes were fixed upon him.

"What is it?" queried the American.

"Senor——"

The voice stopped and Weston was at the speaker's side in a minute.

He lifted the man half-way from the floor and looked into a pair of the deepest eyes.

"Who are you?"

"I am Berto. I am the love of the girl called La Death. I came from Attacao. I—senor, I am near to death."

"But how did you find this place?"

"How does the puma of my native wilds find his mate but by instinct? Is the flower of the forest here?"

CHAPTER XXII.

MASTER SHARP AT WORK.

The newcomer was but a boy in years.

In the depths of his eyes there was a yearning for the girl for whom he had left his forest home and braved the dangers of wood and river to find her again. Weston's soul went out in pity for the youth and he forgot his own peril and condition.

"Is she here?"

"She will come again," said the American. "You will wait here with me for her?"

"She is mine, not yours, senor," and the lips of the boy closed fiercely after the last word. "She was stolen from me in the forest and I haven't seen my wild bird for a long time. She is not yours, senor."

"No, only my friend in need."

The Brazilian boy drew back.

"You are Americano?" he said.

"Yes, American."

"And why here?"

"It is a long story. It is a story about the Black Puma. I came from the United States——"

"Ah!"

The boy closed his eyes and seemed to reflect a little.

"And are you still in the power of the Puma?" he asked at last.

"I hope I am out of it."

The boy drew something from beneath his girdle and handed it to Weston.

"What is this?" asked the American.

"It is death!"

The American held in his hand a tiny dagger which did not seem dangerous enough to inflict the slightest wound.

"This little thing cannot kill," he said with a glance at the youth. "Its blade is so short."

"It has the death point," was the reply. "It is steeped in the poison of the fer-de-lance."

"Oh!" Weston shuddered.

He handed it back to the boy, and just then they both heard a noise that startled them.

The boy raised himself from the floor and listened with all muscles tense and his whole frame in a quiver of excitement.

"Is it the Puma?" he whispered with a look at Weston.

The American did not speak, for the next moment there came three raps on the closed door and he hastened to open it.

There was the flutter of a woman's dress and the next instant Kitty stood before the pair. The eyes of the boy became fastened upon her.

"This is not the flower of the forest," he said with a hurried look at Weston. "This is an Americano."

"Yes. It is Kitty."

The young girl showed excitement in her eyes as she hastened to Weston's side.

"You must go," said she in subdued tones, "But who is this boy?"

"It is Berto, La Death's rural lover."

"When did he come?"

"But a moment ago."

"Sent by the Puma?"

"No, the lad is honest and probably dying."

"Then we must leave him here. This retreat is discovered."

"By the enemy?"

"By Colonel Campo and his band."

Weston's teeth clenched.

"Very well," he said. "I am strong enough to go. But whither?"

"We will go to the boat direct. It sails tomorrow. Once on the water we will be out of the reach of the cabals here. The Black Puma will then be powerless."

"But La Death?"

"She will go, too. We will meet this woman face to face. The mark is on her shoulder. She is not Marice De Marne, but Helen O'Ziris. The boat will land us in time to turn this trial in the interests of of justice and then——"

Kitty paused and looked down at the boy.

"If La Death finds him here her love may return and she may refuse to embark," she said with a troubled look.

"But we might take the lad along——"

"I fear that would not work. I have engaged passage for three. The boy must remain——"

"Where is La Death?"

"She will meet us a few steps from here. She is guarding the trail to the wharf. Come. You are strong?"

"Strong enough to go, but I hate to leave the boy. It will kill him."

Kitty with a look of pity in her eyes went over and stooped beside the boy.

"La senorita will take me to her?" came from the boy's lips.

Kitty glanced at Weston.

"That's an appeal that is hard to resist," she said. "It breaks up the fountains of my heart," and her hand pushed back the midnight hair that clustered round the youth's forehead.

"Berto go, too," he said imploringly.

"Yes, you shall go. They will make room for you on the boat," Kitty exclaimed. "But you carry a dagger?"

"The dagger with the point tipped with the venom of the fer-de-lance, which is death."

"Well, put it up. We must quit this house. The boat must be made at once if we would not fall again into the hands of the Black Puma."

Kitty went across the room and just then all heard a little sound.

The Brazilian boy pricked up his ears and glided away.

He had the movements of the cat of his native jungles. Both Kitty and Weston watched him until he disappeared and then waited for his return.

Seconds seemed hours to the pair in the semi-darkened room. The moments were ticked away by the beating of their hearts.

At last the boy came back.

"Well?" said Weston.

"The trail is clear now," was the reply. "The fer-de-lance has struck."

"What, have you taken life?" cried Kitty. "Where did you find the enemy?"

There was no reply and the little party made ready to leave the house. Kitty led the way, as she had been there before and the dark street was reached.

Suddenly the boy stopped and turned upon those behind him.

"It is there," he said with a gesture toward a shaded spot against one of the old shacks on the right.

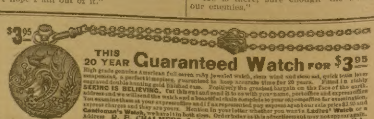
"What is there?" asked Kitty.

"The spy."

The American girl could not resist the temptation that surged to her heart. She crept toward the spot and was gone a moment.

When she came back she found Weston's wrist and her hand closed there with an emphatic clutch.

"He is there, sure enough—the worst of our enemies."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"You don't mean——"

"Yes, it is Colonel Campo!"

Weston uttered a little cry and they moved on again. It seemed an endless journey to the wharf, but at last they saw the ship in the harbor.

At last! Weston felt like uttering a cry of joy, but he suppressed it.

He saw Kitty at his side and looked around for La Death.

"She will join us later on," said Kitty who had interpreted the glance. "She will go with us and face the woman in the city of our own land."

They found a place for Berto on board the steamer and Kitty and Weston went to their respective staterooms.

The hours passed and the silent figure of La Death did not come aboard.

The eyes of the boy did not close. He watched for his forest love with all the intensity of his passion and his figure, half buried on the deck, was at all times on the alert.

Toward daylight a man came aboard. He disappeared below, but was not unseen by the boy. Presently he reappeared and stood for a little while on the steamer's deck.

The orbs of Berto did not lose sight of him. They saw him move shoreward at last and then he was lost to view.

"A cablegram beats a steamer," said this person as he hurried along. "It is the thing for me to do and at once."

The man was Townley Sharp, the so-called detective, but really the secret agent of Mrs. Burke-Deland, the millionairess of the American metropolis.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MAN TO BE RECKONED WITH.

In the office of the district attorney for the County of Bronx sat a little man who was known everywhere.

He was a trifle past fifty, had broad shoulders, gray eyes and a pudgy face.

It was the night before the opening of the long-expected trial of Hector Knight and the man upon whom so much depended was quite alone.

The door opened and the district attorney, without turning around, said, "Take a seat, Mr. Holt," and went on with his work.

"Mr. Holt" was a man hard to describe. His face looked like a smudge on a landscape, his eyes were frog eyes and his little hands were full of warts. He had a manner of squinting which rendered him homelier than ever, and when he turned his face to a jury, which he frequently did, there was a smile if not a titter.

But Norman Holt, for all his ill looks, was a man to be reckoned with, and no witness who sought to garble the truth cared to encounter him.

At last the district attorney turned to his visitor and said with a smile which was not very often on his face:

"It's the same thing, Mr. Holt. If we had a good grip on that woman's past we might expect results."

The smudge nodded.

"You think she has a past, then?" he ventured.

"Let me see the woman who hasn't and I'll show you a curiosity. Marice De Marne has an armor that can be punctured with the right weapon and we have to find it—somewhere."

"And of course you have tried?"

"Yes, I have tried."

"As yet without success?"

The district attorney nodded.

The smudge crossed his legs and ran one hand over the most protuberant warts, a habit he had, and smiled. It was not a very bright smile.

"Do you care to take that end of the case, Mr. Holt?" asked Calvin Quick, the district attorney.

"I am at your service in any capacity," was the reply.

"Very well then. When Mr. Strong is through with the witness you will take her in hand."

Holt nodded.

"It seems to me," he said and then he suddenly paused as if another thought had popped into his mind.

Quick waited.

"There ought to be a way to bring out the whole truth," said the smudge. "I don't quite believe all that has been published about Miss De Marne. She was born in the South, lost her parents by yellow fever, was adopted by a family down near New Orleans and finally fell under the protecting wing of Mrs. 'Hyphen.' "

"That's about all we've been able to rake up about her."

"It's too little," remarked Norman Holt. "There are other chapters and they ought to be brought out."

"Unless we fetch them out we will have hard sailing."

It was a confession that set the lips of the district attorney hard.

"I leave that with you, Mr. Holt," he said, gathering up some papers on the desk. "I have an engagement and you know that it is not likely that Miss De Marne will be called to the stand before day after tomorrow?"

"That is the arrangement, I believe."

Calvin Quick bunched the documents and locked them in a drawer of the table.

Then he went out, leaving Holt sitting in the chair rubbing his warts and thinking deeply. Not a muscle of his smudgy face moved. He seemed oblivious to all surroundings and for nearly an hour he remained in the revolving chair.

Had Marice De Marne seen him she would have laughed at the thought that this excuse for a man was to be pitted against her after she had been coached by Hutton Strong, the greatest criminal lawyer in the country.

The frog eyes seemed listless and the face that held them appeared expressionless.

At last Norman Holt stretched his legs and looked around.

He was alive again, as it were. There came into his eyes a new light. He got up and looked around the room. Perhaps he thought he had not been alone.

When he left the office he went wiggling down the street for several blocks and then ventured aboard a car.

He sank back into one corner where he was not noticed, or if he was, those who saw him made disparaging and facetious remarks about his appearance.

At last, after riding some ten squares, he alighted and went up a flight of outside steps.

He knocked at a door at the head of the flight and was admitted by a repulsive looking old man who thought he had discovered one who discounted him on beauty.

Norman Holt went straight to the one chair in the little workshop and sat down.

"Well, friend?" said old Padouche—the man of the den was the old mystic of the Tenderloin. "You make a late visit."

Norman Holt held out one of his warty hands.

"Can you take them off?" he asked.

Padouche leaned forward and gazed at the warts and smiled.

"You remove such things, don't you?"

"Sometimes, but as you've had a good time with them I should think you wouldn't care to part with old friends."

The smudge grinned, but his smile faded into a stern expression.

"What do you charge?" he asked. "I'm not here for levity, and if I were I'd make a few observations about your own face. It's not a seraph's."

Padouche did not like his caller and was on the eve of saying that he didn't care for the job Norman Holt had suggested when the lawyer went on:

"Don't you ever have marks to remove for the ladies?"

The little eyes of old Padouche twinkled sharply.

"I have sometimes some business from the ladies, yes," he said. "You know they have moles——"

"Yes, moles," and an amused smile came to the face of Norman Holt. "Don't you now and then have occasion to remove tattoo marks from the fair ones?"

"Friend," and the face of the old man came nearer, "that is my business, not yours."

"It is, ha?" and Holt crossed his fat legs. "What if I should make it mine?"

"Which you cannot do."

"What if you should be summoned into court to tell what is your business and what is the State's?"

"I don't take that all in," and old Padouche looked at Norman in a manner that betrayed fear and anxiety.

"I see you don't, but you can be enlightened. That's it, enlightened. You have removed tattoo marks. Do you keep day and date and names on your ledger?"

"I keep no ledger," snapped old Padouche.

"Oh," observed Norman Holt. "Let me see. Your full name is——"

"What are you going to do?" and the old mystic sprang forward, his talon-like hand shooting out toward the little memorandum book which Norman Holt had taken from his pocket.

"I merely asked for your full name, that's all."

"But it don't belong to you."

"Not to me perhaps, but it may belong for a time to the State."

"How?"

"We may want you as a witness tomorrow or the day after."

"In what case?"

"In the case of the State of Manhattan versus Hector Strong."

"Dat case?" and the face of the old man shrank inward a little. "I know nothing about that. I just remain here and 'tend to me business. I make a little money to keep the wolf from the door an'—an'——"

"And the wolf never comes, eh?" and Norman Holt smiled for the first time. "Let me see. You are Dominick Padouche of the parish of St. Charles. Isn't that it?"

"Vy did you ask me eef you know?" said the old man, going back to his mongrel French patois.

"Just for confirmation. But you can escape the summons."

"Eescape ze summons? How?"

"By telling how much you got for a little work done some time ago."

"For vat lady?"

Norman Holt rose and laid his hand on old Padouche's shoulders.

"For Marice De Marne."

The mummy face before him went white.

"It ees a lie, one grand lie!" almost shrieked the old man, but Norman Holt knew better. What he knew was his own secret.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STARTLING LETTER.

Marice De Marne had just come back from a visit to the cell that held Hector Knight.

There was a bright gleam in her lustrous eyes and she was all animated by what he had told her of the coming trial. She had stopped at the office of Hutton Strong, the main lawyer for the defense, and he had added to the hope that filled her bosom.

Mrs. Burke-Deland was in the parlor of her sumptuous home and as Marice entered the eyes of the millionairess snapped over her protege's beauty. Surely she should have credit for bringing out this wonderful girl who was now in the limelight of public notice and whose name and portrait had gone all over the world.

Julia Deland, as she was called when her friends cared to leave off the hyphen, was still a beauty, despite her years, but she was to some extent artificially endowed. At the same time she had enough wealth to captivate some wife-hunter who preferred some cash along with what he was getting in figure.

As Marice threw herself into a chair she sighed and threw a look at her friend.

"Tomorrow will be a strenuous day," remarked Mrs. Deland. "We will see a well-filled courtroom. I am told that the demand for admission exceeds the capacity of the court and that thousands will be turned away. I don't see why, my dear, they could not have held the trial at the Grand Opera House——"

"That would be a good suggestion and I am a little surprised that none of the papers have mentioned it."

"I thought they would have done so," and Mrs. Deland looked at her jeweled hand. "By the way, Marice, a note came for you while you were gone."

Marice De Marne held out her hand and Mrs. Deland placed a folded and sealed note in it.

"I will see Mr. Strong before the trial begins," went on the rich lady. "We want seats for all our friends and——"

"For Mrs. Semiramis particularly," said Marice. "I promised her——"

Just then her gaze fell upon the sheet she had opened and her eyes caught the first words.

"What is it, dear?" exclaimed Mrs. Deland as the paper fluttered from Marice's grasp and landed on the floor at her feet. "In the name of Heaven are you ill, child?"

Marice tried to answer, but the words would not come forth and Julia Deland rose to her feet.

"What is it? Some enemy? Some threat?"

Marice could only point to the paper on the floor and the rich woman picked it up.

"Merciful Heavens!" she cried. "But that is false! It cannot be. He said, you know——"

"But he is like other men. He is purchasable!" exclaimed Marice.

Mrs. Deland was reading the letter which was written in a cramped hand and the letters straggled like a line of retreating troops.

"But he says he is going away," she said, suddenly looking at the pallid face in the chair.

"I did not read that far," and Marice with sudden hope snatched the letter from the woman's hand. "I see—I see."

"He is discreet after all. They can't use him. What a monster the district attorney is."

"I could kill him," and the white lips of Marice De Marne came together. "This wretch is working every string, but he shall fail."

And then she read the letter through, which ran as follows:

"My Dear Lady: Have no fears. I have just been visited by Norman Holt and he asked me about the removel of the mark. They want me for the great trial and he took my name, this man did. They want to prove that I removed the cat's head from your shoulder—but I shall not be here. I shall be far away and where they cannot find. Your friend, PADOUCHE."

Marice turned upon Mrs. Deland and clutched the letter in her white hand.

"Who is this man Holt?" she demanded. "What human wolf is he that he seeks Padouche and threatens to call him to the witness stand?"

Mrs. Deland shook her head helplessly.

"He must be connected with the prosecution. Rest assured, the district attorney will rake the purlieus of Blackstone Row for his henchmen."

"I never heard of Norman Holt."

"It was a strange name to Marice, but it had a meaning which she could not but fear and it sank deep into her soul when she thought of it.

But old Padouche was too sharp for this man Holt. He would not be found and she was safe. Not all the acumen of Norman Holt and his kind would be able to get at her secret, and she felt assured that she would not see Padouche in the witness box to blast the cause of the defense.

By and by she came out of her fears and became herself again.

The morrow would see the beginning of the long-expected trial and the city would hold its breath while the court held in its power the fate of Hector Knight.

But there was one little fly in Marice's ointment.

Of late Noble Knight, Hector's father, had seemed distant to her. True, he had met her on numerous occasions lately, but he had suddenly grown cold and his greetings had lacked the cordiality of other days, say the ones immediately succeeding the tragedy of the Othello Gardens.

Marice did not know that Noble Knight had, or thought he had, a secret of his own. She did not know that he had from the lips of his private detective the story of the obliteration of the cat's head, that this story had sapped his confidence in her and that he doubted if she was a fit mate for his son.

Marice went to her room after her last interview with Mrs. Deland.

She wanted calm nerves for the coming day. She wanted to show to the world that she was the woman whose deep wrongs had been avenged by the unwritten law, that she was the fair woman who had been traduced by Kendall Gray and whose name had been harried by him without regard to what he owed the angelic sex.

And she had gone over the story she would tell. She had told it to Hutton Strong and he had assured her that no one, not even the merciless district attorney, could break her down. She was to maintain her composure at all times. The battle was already won. Hutton Strong would sway the jury with his powerful plea and the unwritten law would score another point.

With such thoughts in her mind Marice De Marne's fair head pressed the pillow.

Once in the night she arose and looked out at the stars that gemmed the great vault of the warm sky and thought of—what? Of the past? Of the roses of a far-away land where the puma roams through the tropic forests, of the dazzling stage of a playhouse where she had reigned as queen, of the presents, of the terrible branding of her flesh—but, thank Heaven, that thing had vanished forever—of the friends she had had those days, of swirl and wine, of the terrible charge against her as Helen O'Ziris?

Did she think of these things? Nay. She stood at the window with the warm winds

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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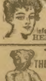

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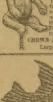

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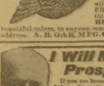

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Publisher—I guess we will have to forgive him. You see, he comes from Milwaukee.

A Bright Lad.

Teacher—Now, Robert, do you know what an isosceles triangle is?

Boy—Yes'm.

Teacher—Well, what is it?

Boy—It's one uh dem t'ings I gits licked for not knowin' what it is.

An Unkind Daughter.

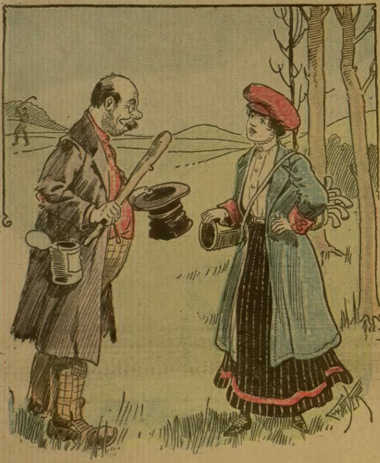
Mrs. Passay—Everybody says my daughter got her beauty from me. What do you say to that?

Mr. Witts—Well, I think it was very unkind of her to take it from you.

In Luck.

"That grafter will meet with retribution some day."

"Perhaps. But at present he is meeting with nothing but contribution."



Lady Golfer (to would-be caddie)—But what do you know about the game. Can you make a tee, for instance?

The Would-be Caddie—Can I make— Why, in my young days, lidy, I used ter do it that well they called me the tea caddy.

The Irrepressible Conflict.

Horrified Spectator—What are those two old men fighting about?

Unconcerned Bystander—Each has just been telling the other that he wouldn't eat a mushroom of the other's selection. Neither of them would stand that.

No Hurry.

Young Bird (on a tree)—There comes a hunter. We'd better fly away.

Old Bird—No hurry. He's got to climb a fence before he gets to us, and his gun will probably catch in a rail and shoot him. They most always do.

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Strenuous.

Jack—What's the matter, dear? You didn't object to my printing a kiss on your ruby lips, did you?

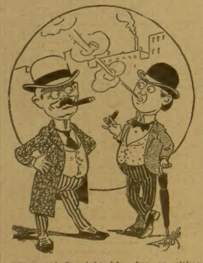
Eva—Print! Gracious! You pressed so hard I thought you were about to engrave it.

Over Ripe.

"Papa!" little Johnny began.

"Now, what do you want?" asked his suffering father, with emphasis on the "now."

"Will my hair fall off when it's ripe like yours?"



"She said I might kiss her on either cheek."

"What did you do?"

"I hesitated for a long time between them."

Generous Mr. Casey.

"When Mr. Casey died he left all he had to the orphan asylum."

"Indeed! That was nice of him. What did he leave?"

"His twelve children."

A Maidenly Hint.

"George," said a pretty girl to her bashful beau, "I wish you'd tie this ribbon at my throat; I can't see how to do it without a glass."

"Of course, I'll be only too glad to," he said, and at once grappled the strings.

After an unsuccessful effort of five minutes' duration, in the course of which he got as red as a brick house, and perspired like a pitcher of ice-water on a window sill in July, he stammered:

"I—I don't think I can tie a respectable knot."

"Suppose, George," she whispered, with a pretty little blush, "suppose you call a minister to assist."

Like the unveiling of a beautiful mystery the situation unfolded itself to that young man, and he feels better now.

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Holding Hands.

The sentimental youth gazed out across the misty woodlands.

"In olden days," he said romantically, "young men and young maidens would sit out on the rustic logs and holds hands."

The modern society girl's lip curled disdainfully.

"Poor lobsters!" she said in tones of pity. "In these days young men and young maidens sit in a brilliantly lighted parlor and holds hands that are worth holding."

And then she led the sentimental youth to a game of "bridge," and it was not long before the "hands" he held had him writing off checks.

Wonderful Results.

"I thought," said the visitor, "I'd drop in and tell you what your hair restorer did for a friend of mine. When he started using your elixir there were only a few hairs on his head, but now it's completely covered."

"Indeed?" exclaimed the patent medicine man.

"Yes, by six feet of earth."

A Habit That Stuck.

Howell—A good deal depends on the formation of early habits.

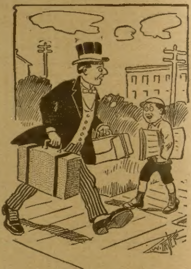
Powell—I know it; when I was a baby my mother hired a woman to wheel me about, and I have been pushed for money ever since.

Not Quite Finished.

"Greathead's a friend of mine. He's invented a flying machine, you know."

"Indeed! Has he given it a practical test yet?"

"Oh, no; he's still alive!"



Subbub—Say, boy, can I catch the train out to Melvin?

The Boy—That depends on how fast you can run. It's been gone twenty minutes.

Such Impudence!

Mrs. Newed—The cook is an impudent thing, so she is.

Newed—What's the trouble, dear?

Mrs. Newed—Why, I discharged her this morning and she refused to go.

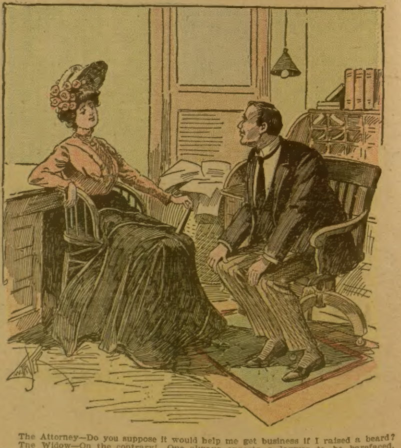
A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to any one. She or one of her sisters comes postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Heredity.

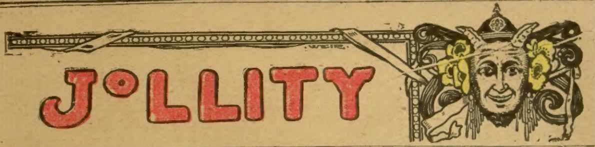
"Do you believe in heredity?" asked the lawyer.

"Sure," replied the dentist. "My father used to pull stumps when he worked on a farm."



The Attorney—Do you suppose it would help me get business if I raised a beard?

The Widow—On the contrary! One always expects a lawyer to be barefaced, you know!



TRAINED NURSE

Remarks About Nourishing Food.

"A physician's wife gave me a package of Grape-Nuts one day, with the remark that she was sure I would find the food very beneficial, both for my own use and for my patients. I was particularly attracted to the food, as at that time the weather was very hot and I appreciated the fact that Grape-Nuts requires no cooking.

"The food was deliciously crisp, and most inviting to the appetite. After making use of it twice a day for three or four weeks, I discovered that it was a most wonderful invigorator. I used to suffer greatly from exhaustion, headaches and depression of spirits. My work had been very trying at times and indigestion had set in.

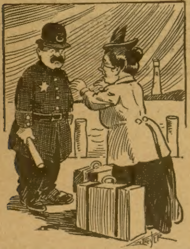
"Now I am always well and ready for any amount of work, have an abundance of active energy, cheerfulness and mental poise. I have proved to my entire satisfaction that this change has been brought about by Grape-Nuts food.

"The fact that it is predigested is a very desirable feature. I have had many remarkable results in feeding Grape-Nuts to my patients, and I cannot speak too highly of the food. My friends constantly comment on the change in my appearance. I have gained 8 pounds since beginning the use of this food." "There's a Reason." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Neighborly Sympathy.

Mrs. Gabb—Did you hear about Mrs. De Goode's husband? He died last night.

Mrs. Gadd—Well! Well! I'll run right over to condole with her, and see if I can't borrow a cup of butter; I'm entirely out.



Fussy Old Lady—Officer, does the boat from Squedunk leave this pier?

Policeman—Yes'm. It has never taken the pier with it yet.

Relieved.

Herbert—Papa, when you were a boy did you ever tell a lie?

Father—I am afraid I did, my boy. Why?

Herbert—Nothing, only I was afraid you did not.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Why It Was Late.

Angry Diner—Hey, waiter; where is that ox-tail soup?

Waiter—Coming, sir—half a minute.

Diner—Confound you! How slow you are!

Waiter—Fault of the soup, sir. Ox tail is always behind.

Sweet Charity.

Beggar—Look here, boss, you've given me a counterfeit.

Goodman—Is that so? Well, keep it for your honesty.

Pa's Opinion.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is an open winter?

Pa—Any winter, my son. They are all open to criticism.

The Great Doctor.

Men dope themselves with medicines
And let dejection lurk
Within them when they might display
The signs of health if only they
Would take mild doses day by day
Of good hard work.

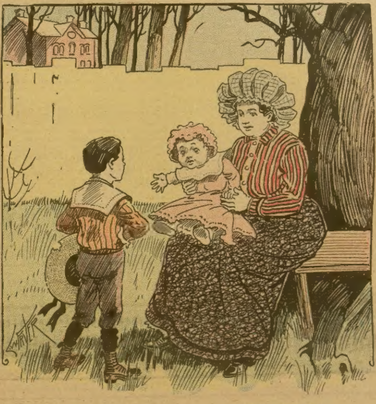
Demand, Not a Proposal.

"Well," said Cadley, scornfully, "I'll bet you didn't do the proposing. It's a safe bet that your wife asked you to marry her."

"No," replied Henpeck, "you're wrong."

"Oh, come now, be honest!"

"No, she didn't ask me; she told me to."



The Nurse—Look, Bobby, what bright eyes your little brother has!
Bobby—Of course! They're new!

Doubtful.

Eva—I hear that your sister Edna has a young dentist calling on her?

Katharine—Yes, and when we hear her scream we don't know whether he is stealing a kiss or pulling a tooth.

By Different Paths.

Banker—Young man, I began at the bottom and worked my way up to where I am.

Genial Burglar—I got a room above and worked my way down.

The Professor.

"In the midst of 'life,' " said the professor, reflecting on the general uncertainty of things, "there is always an 'if.' "

Beginning a Career.

Aspiring Youth—I understand there is a vacancy on your local staff.

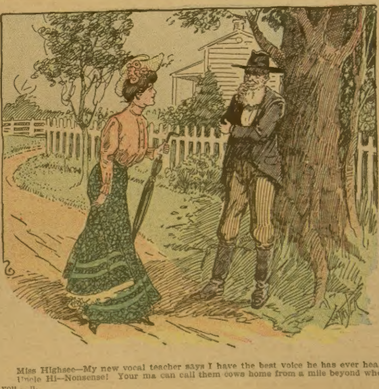
City Editor—Yes, there is; in fact, we are very short-handed, and I can give you a job at once. I want some one to go around and interview Slugg Bulldozer, the eminent politician. This paper charges that he beats his wife and starves his children, and we want to know what he thinks about it.

Aspiring Youth—Um—er—haven't you a regular interviewer for that kind of work?

City Editor—Oh, yes, several of them, but they are all in the hospital.

Why?

"Any fool can ask questions."
"Why do you?"



Miss Highsee—My new vocal teacher says I have the best voice he has ever heard.
Uncle Hi—Nonsense! Your ma can call them cows home from a mile beyond where you can.

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AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY CO., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

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$41 PER WEEK and expenses, to man with rig, to introduce our Poultry Goods. Eureka Manufacturing Co., Dept. L, Navasota, Tex.

"NO BURN" KETTLE BOTTOM, SAMPLE FREE to Agents. Wonderful Seller, try it. [illegible] Co. STAMPING CO., ANDOVER, N. Y.

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$100 A MONTH and traveling expenses paid men to place Pepto-Protein (for stock and poultry) with dealers. Experience unnecessary. *Expenses advanced.* A. DAREL CO., PARSONS, Kansas.

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CHAPTER XVI.

SAVING HAPGOOD.

We waited a long time under the pedestal of a monument erected to the memory of Gly-Koz, the seventy-third husband of the beautiful Atossa, and, according to the professor, a man of rare parts.

"What's the matter with the Prince Consorts?" I asked.

"They age and die," my companion answered.

"And the Queen lives on indefinitely!"

"Her Prime Minister, they say, has taught her the secret."

"By the way," I murmured, "I wonder how the Prime Minister is faring, about now?"

"He is probably back in the palace at this moment. Mr. Zix is indestructible."

At this point a faint glow of light appeared at the eastern gate and was waved back and forth.

"There is Captain Yim," said the professor, with a sigh of relief.

We started forward cautiously, and when we had drawn quite close the light was suddenly extinguished—or, rather, the receptacle holding the radium was covered. Radium glows continually, for light is one of its properties.

"Is that you, Captain Yim?" asked the professor, instinct rather than sight assuring us that we were close to a human figure.

"Yes," was the answer. "The coast is clear, Professor; follow me—here, give me your hand. Nickerson can clasp your arm."

"Where are the disguises?"

"They will not be necessary. The course we shall follow through the palace is dark hence we shall not be seen."

This change in our plans was a little surprising. Concluding, however, that Captain Yim knew his business, the professor clasped his hand, I clasped the professor's, and we fared forward.

We ascended steps and descended steps, traversed long corridors, turned angle after angle and covered miles, as it seemed to me. At last we wheeled sharply to the right, a bolt was shoved, a door opened and we passed into a room.

"The man you seek is here," said our conductor; "behold him!"

A screen fell from a radium brazier and I caught sight of the demoniacal face of the Prime Minister just vanishing through the entrance. With a startled cry I threw myself forward. A metal door slammed in my face, a bolt on the outside was shoved and the clanging echoes glided into a mocking laugh that died out along the corridor.

"Trapped!" I cried.

"Aye," added the professor disconsolately, "trapped by Mr. Zix! Fighting him seems like a waste of effort."

"Captain Yim has betrayed us! Where is the fellow, I wonder?"

"Here," came a melancholy voice from behind us.

We faced about and there, sorrowful and dejected, stood the warrior.

"Captain," said the professor sternly, "what means this?"

"It does not mean, at least," replied the captain, "that you have been betrayed. Lay your fault-finding at the door of the lupozinns."

"I am entitled to an explanation," observed the professor stiffly.

"In order to carry out our plans," went on Captain Yim, "it was necessary for me to take one of the guards into my confidence. When we were done talking, the Prime Minister appeared from behind a curtain. He had overheard everything. The guard with whom I was talking made his escape, but I was seized and clapped into this cell."

"I have no blame for you," said the professor.

"Your power-of-the-gods-bacilli seem to be failing us," I remarked.

"Be patient," my companion counseled; "it may be necessary for them to work indirectly in this instance."

We were in a dungeon in the palace cellar. The gold and silver of the upper floors had given place to aluminum and iron. The cell was small and poorly ventilated, but there was an iron block for each of us to recline upon and we tried to make the best of our situation.

"You are to be confined here," said Captain Yim, "until after the royal marriage."

"Then what?" I asked.

The captain shook his head forebodingly.

"You have both crossed the will of the Prime Minister and have caused him a great deal of annoyance. It is something he does not easily forget."

"Gad!" said I hotly, "if I had it to do over again I should make the debt still greater."

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Write to any or all of these people asking them to tell you about their case and ask them also to frankly and honestly advise you about placing yourself in my hands for treatment. I am financially responsible and refer you to the Traders Bank of Kansas City or to the publisher of this paper.

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I want you to use my medicines for just one month and then if you can conscientiously say, "Dr. Curts, I have not received the benefit that I feel as though I should have received—I want my money returned," I will return it to you as cheerfully as you sent it to me. Answer the questions printed below, sign your name and address, then cut off the coupon on the marked line and send it to me. I will send you my free book and will give you my expert advice without a cent of expense. If there is anything you wish explained, or any question you want to ask, I will answer honestly and without cost, and will give you the same kindly, frank consideration I would expect myself if our positions were reversed. Very truly yours, DR. F. O. CURTS.

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Eyes weak and watery?............Ulcers?.............
Eyelids stick together?......Mattery discharge?.....
Eyes bloodshot?..............Eyes crossed?............
Spots or specks before your eyes?......................
Granulated lids?.............. Wild hairs?..............
Headache?.................. Cataracts?..................
Any growth on eyeball next to nose?.....................

EARS Are you deaf?......Both ears?......
How long deaf?.................
Ringing or buzzing?.....................
Earache?......Does wax form?.....
Ever had Scarlet Fever?.......
Ears discharge?.............
Throat sore?.............
Inflamed?............
Hawking?........
Mucous?......

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P. S.—You should send for this book and read it carefully as I believe that even the general knowledge it imparts will enable you by yourself to overcome many of your simple ailments.—Editor.

"Hush!" cautioned the professor; "even these walls have ears."

"Have you heard anything concerning Hapgood, Captain Yim?" I inquired.

"Only that he has a suite of apartments and is permitted to go and come as he pleases. He seems quite contented with his lot."

"I wonder that the Queen could think of marrying a crazy man."

"She probably does not realize that he is crazy," returned the professor.

"But she must know that Hapgood will not be able to bear this atmosphere for long."

"Her fancy is rather extravagant, at times, and caprice, if I may use the expression, is her long suit. Her character is in entire keeping with the kingdom she rules."

"It looks as though she was neglected by the lupozinns which prey so terribly upon her subjects."

"She is exempt—through the powers of her Prime Minister."

"Then Mr. Zix is the power behind the throne?"

"Atossa bows to him in all things."

We conversed for some time on this subject, breaking off only when we heard footsteps in the corridor without. I arose and glided to the door.

"If that is the Prime Minister," said I, between my teeth, "let him look to himself. I ran from him once, but only once. Henceforth I will face him anywhere."

The professor, I could see, had a mind to curb me; but before he could do so, the bolt was shoved back, the door pulled open and there stepped into our dungeon—no less a person than Hapgood!

My outstretched hands fell at my side, and I dropped back. Hapgood was still wearing his ridiculous, ill-fitting gown. The crown was gone, however, and his appearance correspondingly improved.

"Are—are you alone?" I whispered.

"Certainly I am alone," he returned with a high air.

"Then why have you come here?"

"To release you and your misguided friends," he replied. "Envious man!" he exclaimed, piercing me with a rebuking glance. "You regret my good fortune and would hurry me away from the beautiful Atossa, who would do me the highest honor in her power."

"Great Caesar!" I gasped, turning to the professor. "Of all the bees that ever got into a stockbroker's bonnet here is one that claims the blue ribbon. Don't you know, Hapgood," I went on, addressing him earnestly, "that your beautiful Atossa will prove the death of you?"

"I know," said he, "that I have not long to live, but the supreme felicity of being yoked with such an incomparable sovereign is compensation enough."

"Don't be idiotic," said I.

"And don't you be a dog in the manger," he rapped out. "You can't have the Queen yourself and you don't want any one else to have her."

I flung up my hands and turned away.

"Remember," Professor Markham whispered to me, "that he is not accountable for what he says."

Swallowing my derision, I faced Hapgood again.

"You are going to set us free?" I queried.

"That is why I have come here. The door is open and I will personally conduct you to the palace gate."

"From the way you talk, I suppose you are not going with us?"

"I could not think of such a thing."

"But, Hapgood, it is quite possible we may be able to get back to our own world."

"What do I care for our own world? This one is quite big enough for me. I shall remain here."

"She has hypnotized him," said I, looking at the professor.

"Let him lead us to the gate," and, as he spoke, the professor laid one hand on the breast of his tunic.

I drew him apart.

"Aren't you going to use the hypoderm?" I whispered.

"At the gate," he answered. "Prepare to hold him when we get there. I will pass the word to Captain Yim."

The three of use started out.

"Not you," said Hapgood shortly, pointing his finger at Captain Yim.

"He must go if we do," I declared. "He was trying to befriend you, Hapgood, or he would not be in this place."

"I should think you outsiders would have sense enough to let a fellow alone," grumbled Hapgood, irritably. "I may get myself into trouble by doing this."

"We cannot leave the captain," said Professor Markham gravely.

"Then take him and begone," grunted Hapgood and flung through the door in a huff.

I held to Hapgood, the professor held to me and Captain Yim held to the professor. In this fashion we retraced the course we had covered a short time before.

Passages and stairways were silent deserted. We threaded them without interruption, Hapgood displaying surprising familiarity with the palace, considering his short stay in it.

During our progress I could hear the professor exchanging words with Captain Yim—telling him, no doubt, what was expected of him and me at the gate.

We came, in due course, to the spot where the Prime Minister, posing as Captain Yim, had met us.

"I go no farther," said Hapgood. "Have you any glimgazzets in readiness?"

"We have," answered Captain Yim; "that is," he added, "if Mr. Zix has not caused them to be taken away."

"Then good-by to you," said the demented broker, "and if you are again captured, do not look to me for further favors."

"Now, Nickerson!" spoke up the professor briskly.

Instantly I flung my arms about Hapgood, the captain hurrying to my assistance. Our prisoner struggling like a maniac, shouting for help in a voice that reverberated thunderously about the palace.

"Give me his arm—quick!" exclaimed the professor. "Smother those shouts, if you can."

We did our best, but the alarm that had already been raised was more than enough. Wild commotion was heard within the palace, doors slammed, running feet echoed on the metal tiles, myriads of small lights appeared at windows, doors, on the roof and in the courtyard and excited questions and answers were bandied back and forth.

"There!" cried the professor, "the worst part of our work is over with. See if the birds are where you left them, Captain. Make haste!"

Hapgood's struggles ceased as if by magic; as if by magic, too, the radium mountain offered us day.

Our rescued friend wore a dazed look, gave over his struggles and stretched himself erect.

"Where am I? What has happened?"

"We're in a tight corner, Hapgood," said I, "and all Zurma will soon be after us."

"Oh, Nickerson! is that you?" He yawned and rubbed his eyes. "I feel as though I had been having a nightmare. If you are helping me to escape——"

"We are," I interrupted. "Here come our glimgazzets."

Captain Yim hurried toward us with four birds in leash. Palace birds were being pulled off their roosts, prodded into wakefulness and bridled for flight; guards on foot, also, were surging toward us from the great staircase.

"It will be nip-and-tuck," said Hapgood, cool as you please, as his eyes took in the comprehensive outpouring that threatened to engulf us.

"Mount!" I urged, flinging myself to the back of a crouching glimgazzet.

"Where are we going?"

"Leave that to us."

He mounted, Captain Yim and the professor were already in place, then upward we soared, upward and away, over the roof-tops and the lupozinn funnels, and onward at breakneck speed toward the mysterious Sphere that was our only haven.

CHAPTER XVII.

EAMES TURNS A TRICK.

Looking back on our visit to the Imperial City of Zurma it gives the impression of a continual flight, with an occasional halt wherein we experienced thrills and plumed our wings for a fresh essay toward freedom. This, I was told by our good professor, was typical of the country.

The mental attitude of the people, in that land of contraries, was one of retreat. They were continually dodging the lash of the unforseen, which was always expected.

Of the many marvels encountered during our extravagant adventures, the reclaiming of Hapgood from his crazed condition will stand in the first rank. No sooner had the deracins been released in his veins than his distressing malady vanished, and he became his genial and sympathetic self.

The failure of ill-luck to attend the professor and me was entirely within the range of coincidence, but the recovery of Hapgood could not be so considered. The deracins had shown their beneficent power beyond all peradventure.

A culminating feature of the affair occurred during our headlong flight toward the Sphere of Gravitation. I happened to be wing-and-wing with Hapgood and observed him groping in the garments for which that frightful tunic formed a mere veneer.

In a little time he found what he was after—the double-headed coin wherewith he had so often beguiled himself and lulled the weakness that men have for feeling that fate points them the way of their secret desires. Flipping it in the air, he allowed it to drop far, far into the region below. Then he turned to me with a broad smile.

"I wonder how that thing ever came to have such an influence over me," he remarked. "Somehow I am beginning to feel different about these matters of Chance."

I was struck with the similiarity of his action with the coin and Eames treatment of the loaded cube. Each had taken the drastic step immediately after the professor had applied his new bacilli. There was a truth here which no thoughtful mind could ignore.

"What do you remember last, Hapgood," I asked, "prior to your awakening?"

"The loss of a cigar," he answered promptly, "which I had been hoarding against the time my nerves should call for it. It was the shock, I think, which brought a lucid glimmering."

"Don't you remember seeing me—and the professor?"

"No."

"And you haven't the least notion of what you said?"

"Can't recall a word. What did I say?"

"I won't distress you by going over the scene," said I, glad in my heart that this acknowledgement had swept away my last doubt.

That was an inopportune time for conversation. This was brought home to us at this juncture, by Captain Yim.

"They're drawing closer to us," he called.

The rest of us turned our heads and beheld a solid phalanyx of warriors, courtiers and civilians diminishing the distance that lay between us.

"In ten minutes," said Captain Yim, "they will be close enough to begin hurling their lupozinn-balls. Then disaster cannot help befalling us."

I could see that the professor was worried.

"Forge ahead of us, Captain," he counseled. "Take the lead and allow the rest of us to form a screen behind you."

Captain Yim tossed his head proudly.

"When my troops charge," he answered, "I head the van; when they retreat I am with the rear-guard."

"That's a fine sentiment, but hardly applicable in the present emergency. The lupozinn balls can have no effect upon myself, or Nickerson, or Hapgood. On the other hand, you are directly open to their deadly effects."

"I don't understand," returned the puzzled captain.

"I know you don't," persisted the professor, "but just take my word for it. Fly on ahead now, there's a good fellow."

At that instant the familiar popping of a ball was heard and I saw that one of them had landed on the professor's shoulder. A glance to rearward discovered the one-eyed guard just withdrawing his right hand. He was a powerful fellow and had made a phenomenal throw.

Captain Yim looked at the professor anxiously.

"Nothing will happen," smiled the little mand. And nothing did. The captain, consumed with wonder, urged his glimgazzet into the lead.

We were yet a long way from the Sphere of Gravitation, and if the balls had no effect there remained the contingency of a mid-air hand-to-hand conflict. Our foes were in sufficient force literally to overwhelm us.

Five minutes more and the pursuers were showering us with their queer projectiles; but, although the professor, Hapgood and I were hit repeatedly, the missiles were as harmless as so many globes of glass.

Captain Yim had no monopoly of the amazement. Those behind us were ludicrously perplexed.

Various accidents, also, were thinning their ranks. Their number, however, could be lessened twice as fast without appreciably lessening our danger.

"We must reach the Sphere before they overtake us!" shouted the professor, his face even whiter than usual and sternly set.

"Impossible," Captain Yim called back. "There is no hope for us."

The captain was not frightened. He had weighed the situation calmly and was equally calm in announcing his conclusion.

The professor's "must" was born of the logic of nil desperandum, gloriously futile yet betraying his Spartan spirit.

Captain Yim's words were hardly off his lips before a yellow ball, sailing between Hapgood and me, struck him squarely. The effect was instantaneous. His bird began to flutter, to lose speed and to turn obliquely in the air.

It was my lot to clasp the valiant captain as he was about to be unseated, and to cling to him while the glimgazzet dropped earthward. My own bird, with its double burden, began to lag

"Release me, Nickerson," implored the captain. "I do no more than hamper you. Besides, the end will be the same."

"In that event," I returned grimly, "I might as well hang on to you as to let you slide. We shall both be saved, or both lost, I promise you that."

We were disheartened. There appeared no possible loophole through which we might effect our escape. Realizing this fully as much as we did, our pursuers set up a chorus of exultant cries.

"I am more than sorry," spoke up Hapgood, "that I should be the cause of our unhappy predicament."

"Spoken like a man, sir," answered the professor, "but let me assure you that your regret is uncalled for. To abandon you was beside the question. Nickerson, is there any way in which we can help you support Captain Yim?"

"'Tis useless labor," said the captain. "I should fight myself free but for the fear of dragging Nickerson with me."

In that critical moment, when the Zurmans were arching out to surround us, when our only hope was in despair and when defeat and capture seemed inevitable the tide of fortune turned; and it turned so mysteriously, yet so completely, that we were dazed and dumfounded.

The pursuing glimgazzets, instead of surrounding us, whirled abruptly and, with shriek upon shriek, started back toward the capital.

"Can I believe my eyes?" cried Hapgood.

"A most astounding occurrence!" exclaimed the professor.

"What do you think of this move, Captain?" I asked of the man I was supporting.

"It is beyond me," the captain answered.

In the same way it was beyond all of us, and only explained when we had drawn toward the limits of the Sphere and beheld Eames plunging toward us through space, his tunic flying out behind him and his manner one of intense excitement.

"The box!" he shouted incoherently, "the box!"

"What box?" called the professor. "Has anything happened at the castl

"I should say so!" answered Eames. "We had an accident and that box of what-d'ye-call-ems got away from us!"

"Well, well!" muttered the professor, more readily grasping Eames' meaning than I could do.

"Any damage done?" panted Eames, gaining the brink as our birds settled down on the rocks. "What'll happen? Miss Markham is nearly distracted."

"Great things will happen, Eames," said the professor with a smile; "as a matter of fact, one of the great things has already [illegible]

[illegible] sor's smile, Eames [illegible]

"What has [illegible]" he queried.

"Why," was the professor's answer, "to the accident which released the bacilli Markhamani every one in this party owes his life."

Then I began to comprehend.

"What in Sam Hill are you fellows driving at?" demanded Hapgood.

And Captain Yim, whom I had just released, looked the same question even though he did not put it in words.

This thrilling and remarkable story will be concluded in next week's Ledger. To every one subscribing for the Ledger we are still sending a camera and patterns free as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

A Fatal Flirtation.

(Continued fr[illegible] page five.)

me to look in the old portfolio for some sketches which he had made at the time. I, too, have been something of an artist, but my less ambitious attempts in the portfolio were unsigned, whereas Maurice invariably marked his in the corner with the [illegible] the name he was using then, 'H. D.'—for Herbert Donald, you understand."

Yes—Rose understood all too well.

"Maurice asked me to find out Miss Dare," went on Serge, "and if it seemed advisable, to acquaint her with the fact of his tardy repentance. He little dreamed that she had been dead nine years, [illegible] that her sister, an inmate of his [illegible] hold, only lived for vengeance on him!"

Rose shudde[illegible]

"I know the rest," she whispered. "M[illegible] Dare told me everything, thinking it w[illegible]"

"And you believed her, Rose?"

She crept a little close to him and looked up entreatingly

"You were so strange—so unlik[illegible]" she faltered.

Serge's brow clouded suddenly.

[illegible] admitted.

You see, it [illegible] rough on me to find out quite [illegible] rl who had just promised to be my wife was not what I believed her to be when I proposed to her—I beg your pardon, Miss Maple, if I seem to be speaking too harshly, but—ah, Rose, [illegible]

"I didn't! You deceived yourself!" she retorted, with unexpected [illegible] could I help it, if you ch[illegible]ine that Uncle Robert's niece [illegible]arily be a penniless maiden? Was it my place to proclaim the fact that I am an heiress [illegible] have been through a season and a half, and should be in town still if I hadn't got sick and tired of it, and run away to Uncle Robert in the middle of [illegible]ety?"

There was a pause. Serg[illegible] walked on, looking moodily on the ground, and R[illegible] pulled her hat lower over her eyes.

"W[illegible]u?" she asked.

"[illegible] I [illegible] up to town yesterday [illegible] arriage with that friend of [illegible] Lord Edward Kellar, and an un[illegible]y pretty girl who, I suppose, was [illegible] And they were talking

[illegible]ng about me? What did they say?" she cried.

Serge smiled grimly.

"They wondered what your object could be in burying yourself in the country, and whether you repented having refused the Prince of Something—or—other, and what sort of a fellow you would eventually select to share your fortune, and——"

"That will do," said Rose, crimson as her namesake. "Lord Edward is the most near-sighted man in the world—he didn't recognize you of course. But you—why didn't you change your coach?"

"It was the Express."

There was another silence, broken again by Rose

"Well," she said. "Aren't you going to forgive me? I did not deceive you wilfully, but when you first made me care for you and then told me that you would nev[illegible] never marry a girl with money, what w[illegible] I to do?"

Serge made no reply. He was crushing down an overwhelming impulse to cover the winsome little face with kisses.

Rose waited for an instant, and then the color ebbed suddenly from her lips and cheeks, and she drew her slight figure to its full height.

"I am going indoor [illegible] morning, Serge, and good-[illegible]

"Rose!"

He was only just in time. [illegible] pride was up [illegible] told herself that she could never forgive him; but his voice and his touch broke the spell.

"Oh, why were you so long?" she whispered. "I began to think——"

"I know, I know!" he cried. "I [illegible] fool—a proud, self-conceited idiot. I love you, Rose; rich or poor, you are the one woman in the world for me"

CHAPTER VII.

Little Bertie—Sir Herbert now—lingered longer than the doctors had expected, but ten days aft[illegible] tiny coffin was laid [illegible] Maurice in the family vault, and [illegible] Arkloe succeeded to the baronetcy and the estate. There was, however, still a sick-room in the great lonely house, for the governess, Jennet Dare, lay prostrate with no immediate prospect of her recovery. Mrs. Mellor had left the Hall, and take[illegible] her the unhappy daughter who had be[illegible] the innocent cause of so much misunderstanding.

Jennet wanted to die, and for many weeks her recovery seemed almost an impossibility; but by degrees strength returned to her, though the bandage still lay heav[illegible] across her eyes.

"When shall I be able to raise it [illegible] asked one day. "I want to get away as soon as I can. When may I use my eyes again?"

The nurse made an evasive reply, but something in her carefully-modulated tone gave the unhappy woman the first inkling of the bitter truth. She put one or two quick, searching questions that the nurse could not evade and then she turned her face to the wall and refused to be comforted.

"What is there to live for?" she asked herself dully. "I am blind, helpless, friendless—struck down under the very roof of my enemy, with my revenge uncomplete and—ah, who is there?" She broke off, d[illegible]tecting with the strange, new sensitiveness that had become hers already, the sound of an unfamiliar footstep approaching her bed.

"It is I—Rose Maple," was the gentle reply. "They would not let me come before; but you are better now."

R[illegible] I was bending in tender pity over the poor maimed face on the pillow. Her hands were trembling and her heart beat to suffocation, for she had undertaken to tell Jennet the truth and to clear her lover's name.

"Child, what brings you here?" asked the sick woman bitterly. "Have you forgotten that it is I who spoke the words that ruined your dream of love—who dashed your idol from its pedestal? I was so mad with the joy of vengeance that for the moment I forgot that it might fall more heavily upon you than upon him, the traitor who——"

"Oh, hush, hush!" interrupted Rose, with a shudder. "You need not di[illegible] self about me; I am far happier than I de[illegible]ve to be. But you do not know what you are saying when you speak of him l[illegible] that! You have made a terrible mistake!" And then, without any further delay, she told her sto[illegible]

Jennet listened in silence. Years after, when she was able to look back alm[illegible] calmly upon that episode in her life, she [illegible]d that during those moments she had passed through the bitterness of death.

"Go! Leave me alone!" cried Jennet at length. And Rose crept silently away

So it was all over! The nine long years of scheming and anxious waiting had come to naught! Emmeline's death had indeed been atoned for by her lover's unhappy "death in life;" but a stronger hand than Jennet's had brought this about, and the woman bowed before the knowledge. She left the Hall as soon as she was able to travel. Her tiny income and her small savings enabled her to live in a semi-charitable institute for gentlewomen, where the remainder of her monotonous days were to be spent. She never knew that Sir Serge Arkloe supplied what was lacking in the sum required for her support there. It would have broken her heart had she guessed the truth.

Serge and Rose were married very quietly in the spring following Sir Maurice's death. Rose was a rich woman—Serge's worst anticipations were more than realized in that respect; but he bore the blow with remarkable fortitude, considering his well-known antipathy to heiresses. Mrs. Davy recovered from her amazement at this unexpected turn of events with commendable promptitude

"My dear [illegible]oy, I am delighted!" she assured him. [illegible]o you were wiser than any of us? No, don't look cross, I am not hinting that you possessed a key to the [illegible] It is Gladys who says now that she knew it from the first." But there was a twinkle in the speaker's eyes that belied her words, and, though Serge only laughed, Rose crimsoned indignantly

"Come out into the garden, dear," she whispered.

It was the [illegible] before the wedding—a soft, April afternoon—and Serge had walked down to the rectory with his cousin, who was staying at the Hall for the ceremony. They left the rector to entertain [illegible] Davy and made their escape. [illegible] leading him down the path to the swing-gate that opened into the road.

"Suppose we stroll round to the shrubbery or the orchard" [illegible] ge sugg[illegible]

"In a moment, dear [illegible] were misty with a tender reminiscence "Do you guess why I brought you here?" she whispered.

"Do you remember a certain evening last summer when you drove past with poor little Bert to meet—" She hesitated, for it was still difficult to utter Jennet's name.

Serge nodded silently. How vividly it all [illegible]ne back to him—the summer evening that had brought him face to face for the first time with the two women who were destined to exercise so great an influence over his life!

"I remember," he said presently, and then he took Rose's hand and led her away to the orchard, where the damson trees were in blossom and buttercups starred the [illegible]

The next day they were married. Did they give even a passing thought to the lonely woman who, herself little more than a girl, had staked her youth and all upon one terrible throw—and had lost?

Jennet, sitting alone in the darkened room, was thinking of them at that moment. She could picture the whole scene, and, though she did not grudge them their happiness, her sightless eyes were heavy with bitter tears. But she passed out of their life like a dream, and their future [illegible]ained unclouded by the vengeance of Jennet Dare.

(The end.)

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BOYS' AND GIRLS' CORNER

The LOST TREASURE;

Or, SEARCHING THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS, by GENERAL OLIVER BENNETT.

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CHAPTER III.
THE STORY OF THE WRECK.

Althought Lance well know the story of the loss of tne gold, tne tale of the mysterious city of the Andes he asked his mother to tell it once more. He could not remember his grandfather, the active hero of the strange adventures, but his father had often related tne details of the loss and the discovery to him. The boy now hoped that some detail which had escaped his recollection might be brought out by a new relation of the strange series of adventure, and in this he was not mistaken.

"As you know," began the widow, in a reminiscent tone, "your grandfather was a naval officer during the Civil War, serving under the flag of the South. When the war closed, like many others, he believed that his life would be in danger, and that his property, what was left of it, would be confiscated by the conquerors. Little did the people of the South know then that the North was to revivify the South instead of devastating it.

"With this belief fixed firmly in his mind, your grandfather turned every bit of available property into gold, which was hard to get in those days, and which was worth a great premium, and into diamonds, which were hard to secure also. Having accomplished this, at a great loss, he chartered the best vessel available and, with the aid of two heavily bribed fishermen, ran the insufficient blockade and set sail for Honduras, at that time the land of refuge for hundreds of fleeing Southerners.

"He encountered unfavorable weather all across the Gulf of Mexico, but had passed safely through the Yucatan channel and was well down the coast when a furious storm broke upon him. This storm came up so suddenly, and so completely wrecked the unseaworthy craft that your grandfather had difficulty in escaping with his life, the boats not being lowered a second too soon.

"He finally succeeded in reaching Honduras, however, and, being penniless, was glad to secure employment of an English firm who had previously done business with him. Here he remained until, through the leniency of the American nation, he was enabled to return in safety to his old home.

"But he never recovered from the loss of his fortune, never gave over the notion that it might be recovered. All his gold, jewels and papers were in a strong safe on board the wrecked vessel, and he was careful not to talk about the location of the wrecked vessel, for fear that some enterprising diver might locate and remove the treasure."

"Then the treasure is not in the Gulf of Mexico at all, but in the Gulf of Honduras," asked Lance. "You have always said the Gulf of Mexico, and so did father."

"You now know the reason," replied the mother. "The treasure is in the Gulf of Honduras, somewhere in the vicinity of the Bay Islands. I fancy it has done no harm to deceive you as to the location. Even boys of your discretion will sometimes talk, you know, my son," added the mother.

"But grandfather retrieved his fortune, didn't he?" asked Lance, smilingly ignoring the last remark. "He was wealthy when he died?"

"Your father was the one who accumulated the wealth we now have—or did have a few days ago," said the widow with a sigh. "I brought him quite a sum at our marriage, and he managed it well. Now, here are your grandfather's papers. We may as well go through them now."

The careful grandfather had left charts and written records, showing the sum of the wealth and the exact location of the wreck, and these the two eagerly examined. The name of his vessel was the Seabird.

"This looks easy to me," said Lance, after he had examined all the papers. "In fact, it's too easy for anything, and I'm glad we have the trip to the city of the Andes to look forward to for a little excitement. For years the Winlow family has needed just such a machine as lies out there by the old wharf. But you made a skip in the story about grandfather. You brought him from Honduras back to Louisiana, whereas there was the trip to the Andes. Tell me about that."

"Your father was always greatly fascinated by the story of the City of Silver and Gold," said the mother, "and often planned expeditions to Peru, but somehow he never got started. Your grandfather told wonderful stories about that mountain city and its marvellous treasures."

"There are untold treasures of silver and gold in Peru this day," said Lance. "No one knows how much wealth has been taken from the hidden mines of that strange and almost inaccessible country. And there are cities there which the foot of the white man has never reached," he added. "Even modern scientists, who doubt everything not proven by figures or the test-tube, admit that. Of course they are not mighty cities, but they are wealthy ones."

"There is little doubt of the correctness of your views," said the mother, "for the experience of your grandfather proves it. Failing to find in Honduras the success he sought, he left for a trip to Peru, hoping to enrich himself in the hidden gold and silver mines of the Andes. It was during this trip that he came upon the City of Silver and Gold, and barely escaped with his life."

"By a subterranean river," said Lance, who knew this part of the story well. "A river making its way under the mountains.

"I remember that part of the adventure well," continued Lance, "as it was my favorite story when father and I sat together in the duck. Poor father! If he had only lived to see his dreams of the recovery of this wealth realized!"

"Don't be too hopeful," said the mother.

"It's easy," declared the boy. "Well, I shall set Dross and Duff at work at once, getting in the provisions while I lay in a stock of chemicals and electric appliances which may be needed on the voyage. I shall be far enough from a base of supplies when creeping along on the ocean floor, in quest of the treasure or floating high above the mountains, looking down upon the City of Silver and Gold."

The next few days were busy ones for Lance Winlow and his two companions Dross and Duff. The latter two were now enthusiastic over the voyage. At first they had naturally been a little apprehensive about going under the water and up in the air, but the experimental trips had satisfied them that there was little if any danger. The jolly fellows were, however, still full of their pranks, each trying to scare the other.

"You'll look fine droppin' down a mile," declared Dross as Duff approached him one day when the work was nearly done, the machine nearly ready for her journey. "You ain't no fish nor no bird, to swim or float in the air."

"Youall 'tend to yo' business," replied Duff, "or I make trouble, suah!"

He approached the white-faced boy with a razor about a foot long swinging threateningly in his hand.

"Stan' back, nigger!" exclaimed Dross drawing a glittering revolver of giant size.

"Look here," shouted Lance from a window of the workshop, "if you boys don't put up those weapons I'll have you pinched."

The seeming combatants laughed. This was only one of their many tricks.

"Dis am a fake razzer," said Duff. "I made it out'n tin an' keep it to bluff po' white trash, like dis one."

"An' this is a glass pistol," cried Dross, "an' contains ague specific. Just you watch me."

He uncorked the pistol and the odor of rye whisky filled the air. The negro looked on enviously, but Lance warned the white boy against the use of this ague specific. How necessary this warning was, and what trouble came of its neglect, will be seen later.

Before the start was made the boat was written up and written down, photographed and sketched by newspaper reporters and artists, but no one save Lance and his mother knew the destination of the craft or the purpose of the voyage.

The trip to Port Eads was made under water. Here two reporters who had accompanied Lance to this point were landed.

"The machine is the wonder of the age," one of them said, "and you are today, Mr. Winlow, the foremost inventor of the day, save only Edison, and you have done something here which even he might not have accomplished. Be sure that your fame shall be spread to the ends of the earth."

Lance thanked the men for their good wishes and gave the signal for starting. Obedient to Dross' hand, the machine sank into the waters with a hissing sound, and was soon on her way to the Gulf of Honduras.

Regular watches were now set and strict discipline established, never to be relaxed on board the Pioneer. Lance took the wheel first, and Dross and Duff turned in for a little sleep until called in turn.

The electric boat behaved beautifully and, at a depth of sixty feet, swung through the water like a bird in the air, and at a speed of more than thirty miles to the hour. The boy owner was proud of her, as well he might be.

And so the daring, resolute boy rushed onward through the gloomy depths to a future wholly vague and unknown. On the one hand lay a world-wide fame, wealth and the commendation of his mother; on the other, failure, perhaps death; but on both sides, however the Fates might decree, were wild adventures and deadly perils!

CHAPTER IV.
A SURPRISED CAPTAIN.

"We must pass through the Yucatan channel and get well down on the coast of Honduras," Lance explained to his assistants at breakfast the next morning, "before we are anywhere near the end of our journey."

While Duff had been preparing the morning meal, Lance had spent an hour over his grandfather's papers and charts. There were many diagrams, and these the boy studied with special care. All pointed to the vicinity of the Bay Islands.

The daring navigator had about concluded that the Seabird had struck on a sunken coral reef near the islands and gone to the bottom just as the storm struck her. In no other way could he account for the sudden wrecking of the ship.

He had never referred to this belief in the presence of his mother, for they had studied the possible course of the Seabird over together, and there were no reefs such as he fancied had sunk the ship in the path of the voyage as they understood it. In fact, they boy believed that the reef which had wrought such deadly mischief had sunk farther into the sea, and would now be hard to find. He was resolved to pursue his search in accordance with this opinion, and this would take the Pioneer much under water. However, he was not yet near the scene of the wreck, and so, after breakfast, he sent the boat to the surface and looked out on the still waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

No breeze ruffled the bosom of the gulf as Lance looked out from the window of his reading-room. The sun shone brightly. The screw drove the boat along at a speed of thirty miles an hour. The scene was a beautiful one.

Great fishes played about, flashing here and there in the clear water. Broad-winged birds floated in the air, now and then dipping their breasts in the waves or skimming over the smooth surface of the water. Occasionally long, trailing clouds of black smoke indicated the presence of a steamer in the distance. Snowy sails lifted against the blue horizon. All was peace.

About noon Lance discovered, a league astern and bearing down upon him, a great steamer that he at once recognized. It was the Bohemia of New Orleans, and plied between that port and Rio Janeiro.

Captain Clairborne of the Bohemia, and Lance's father had been warm friends, and the generous-hearted old captain had often urged Lance to take a berth on his vessel. It is needless to say that the boy had always been too busy with his pet hobby to accept the offer.

"I'll meet you on the sea some day," he had often said to the captain, "and then we will compare ships."

The captain had always taken the boy's notions seriously, for he was a firm believer in submarine and aerial navigation.

"If you'll do something more than play with your ideas," the captain would say on such occasions, "there is no reason why you should not sail down upon me from the air, or up from the depths of the sea."

Then Lance would laugh and change the subject, for he did not want even this friend of the family to know how serious was his work, how steadfastly he had set himself to a great and seemingly impossible task! On one occasion, when the boy and the captain were alone together, the latter had said:

"The bottom of the sea is fairly strewn with treasure wrecks. Millions lie beyond the reach of human hands in places quite well known. If you can perfect your deep-sea boat, you may easily become the richest man in the world."

And Lance, although he had treated the matter jokingly, never forgot those words. The sea filled with charted, wrecked ships. Gold at the bottom in quantities which

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would make earth's supply appear small and mean! The boy was not money mad. He wanted enough for his mother and his experiments, and he wanted the pleasure of finding the sunken gold of long-forgotten ages.

Captain Clairborne had left New Orleans one day before the sailing of the Pioneer, and so had read in the newspapers something of the boy's machine, but of course nothing concerning the long voyage or its purpose. It is needless to say that the captain was astonished to see the electric boat ahead of him.

"That's Lance Winlow, as sure as I am a foot high!" cried the captain, as the boy appeared at the window of his reading-room. "I hope he has accomplished something with his boat. He's a bright boy."

Presently Lance slowed down to wait for the steamer, and soon, like a floating palace, it came roaring and puffing across the waste of waters. The Pioneer seemed but a walnut shell in comparison as the captain ordered the rope thrown.

The captain looked over the electric machine with amazement amounting almost to awe showing in his weather-beaten face.

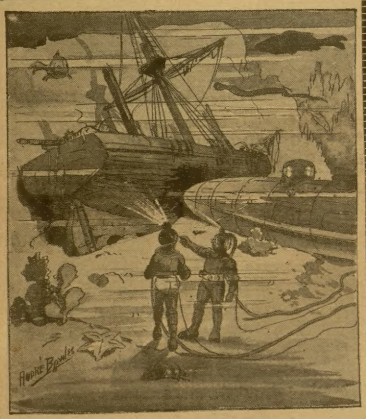
"You have certainly met me on the sea!" he shouted down to Lance. "What do you call that concern?"

"Come aboard and see," was the laughing reply.

Captain Clairborne was not slow in accepting the invitation, and was soon on the Pioneer, accompanied by a tall, handsome young fellow of about Lance's age.

"Come, Tom," said the captain, pushing the boy forward, "I want to introduce you to just the cleverest young fellow on earth! Mr. Winlow, this is my son, Tom."

The boys shook hands, and from that moment were friends. In fact that meeting was the beginning of a long and intimate friendship. Adventures, pleasures and deadly perils shared together only rendered their friendship stronger.



"Look! Look!" cried Lance.

Lance, it may well be understood, showed the captain and his son over the machine with no little pride. They were delighted with all they saw, and expressed their impressions of the boat in very flattering terms.

After all had been inspected, Lance ordered all made tight and sent the boat under the waves. Here he turned on the powerful searchlight and directed the boat on a short tour about the Bohemia, causing great excitement on board the steamer. The passengers rubbed their eyes in wonder as the little boat disappeared beneath the water, and they were wondering if it would ever be seen again when it popped up on the other side of the big boat.

Young Tom Clairborne was enthusiastic. He had never imagined such a trip.

"When I go out on my next cruise," he said to his father, "I think I shall exchange to the Pioneer."

The captain saw that the boy was infatuated with the young inventor and with his work, and, seeing no reason to object to the companionship of the two, replied:

"We shall see about that later."

"I hope he will come with me," urged Lance.

"All in good time," said the captain.

"I'd like to go this minute," said the young man.

After a very friendly visit on board the Bohemia, Lance being introduced to the passengers as the inventor of the wonderful electric machine they had seen, the two boats parted company. The next morning the Pioneer was many miles ahead of the Bohemia, and rapidly increasing the distance. But they were destined to meet again, and under far different circumstances.

The next day the electric boat passed through the Yucatan channel and proceeded southward down the coast toward the Bay Islands.

Now the boy inventor studied his grandfather's charts, maps and diagrams closer than ever, and located, as he believed, the very spot where the unfortunate Seabird had gone down years before.

This accomplished, he prepared to send the boat to the bottom.

"My present plan is to anchor the Pioneer at the bottom," he explained to his assistants, "and then search for a reasonable distance on every side. By moving along a little each day, we can soon cover this entire valley of the ocean bed."

"Lordy!" cried Duff, an apprehensive tremble in his mellow voice. "How deep is it yer, boss?"

"It doesn't matter," replied Lance. "Down we go."

"Huh!" cried the scared little black man, "de sea just scrunches up things what goes too deep! Monstrous big fish down there, boss!"

"It can't scrunch us," replied Lance. "We can go down five miles if necessary, and our diving suits will stand great pressure. We need not fear the fish, either."

"A'right, Massa Lance," replied Duff, "dis coon'll go, but he's mighty scared."

"Same here," said Dross. "This is not like going to the bottom of the bayou at home."

"Huh! What if you is killed?" demanded Duff in a voice of contempt. "You ain't got no pretty Dilsey gal a-waitin' fer you."

"There's a rich and lovely young lady in New Orleans," said the lanky white man, "who only awaits my return to make me her——"

"Ho! Ho!" shouted Duff. "She'll make you her waiter, if she can't get a smooth, young colored gemmen like me."

Dross reached for his glass pistol, and Duff at once removed his hat and begged the owner thereof to "shoot him right in front with two barrels out dat gun."

Lance warned the two to be careful of the glass pistol, saying that there was more danger in its barrel than at the bottom of the sea, and turned the water into the lower reservoirs. The boat sank on an even keel, and was soon far from the surface.

Lance kept his eyes fixed on the register which indicated the depth of the boat, watching with no little interest the action of the machine in deep water.

It was the first visit of the boy to the unknown depths, and he naturally felt very anxious as to how his little vessel would stand the great pressure. Heretofore he had not taken the boat to a depth of more than a hundred feet.

He had great confidence in his machine and never faltered as it sank lower and lower into the depths of the ocean. The searchlight revealed many queer creatures on every side, but the occupants of the boat had no eyes for such things at that time.

Anxiously Dross and Duff watched the young inventor, seeking to learn from his face the story of victory or defeat, but they saw only a look of interest as he kept his hand on the lever, his eyes on the register.

The boat stood the pressure well. There was no cracking, no starting of riveted seams. The air was also remarkably pure, thanks to the perfect apparatus prepared for the purpose of supplying plenty of oxygen. This, it may be well to state, was not an invention of the boy's, but the kind in use on all submarine boats.

"Here we are!" cried Duff, with a chuckle of delight, as the boat came with a slight shock to the bottom.

The depth register showed over 200 fathoms, or about one-fourth of a mile.

The searchlight showed a vast barren tract, sandy and sloping away from the boat to the right and left. Lance looked keenly about for some signs of volcanic formation, but saw nothing of the sort. The sunken reef theory began to lose ground in his mind, for his charts told him that he could not be far from the scene of the wreck.

"There is no use in stopping here," said Lance presently. "This is merely a clean-swept ridge, and no vessel would remain here, even if she landed here, as the action of the waves would gradually push her into one of the valleys we see."

The Pioneer steamed ahead for two or three miles, every moment sinking deeper into the water. The scene now rapidly changed. The brilliant searchlight transformed those mile-deep, murky surroundings into a fairyland.

CHAPTER V.
DOWN DEEP IN THE SEA.

As the Pioneer glided along through the still water of the under world fantastic shapes, both animate and inanimate, flashed into view. Lights and shadows! Glow and gloom!

Huge rocks now began to appear. Here were deep-sea canyons, hillocks and openings which seemed to lead to submarine caverns. Here were copses of ragged seaweed and bushes which seemed not unlike those growing far up in the light of the sun. The world of water, though separated by only a few yards from the upper world, is and must always remain a mystery to mankind, spite of the daring navigators who brave the lower depths.

Dross and Duff, no longer anxious as to their personal safety, watched the wonderful panorama with wide-open eyes and con-

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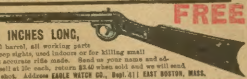

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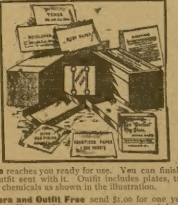

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stant exclamations of wonder and delight.

"Ah's jus' feelin' laik playin' me ol' banjo," cried the negro.

Dross turned quickly upon him, saying with mock contempt in his voice:

"When I hear a banjo I feel like kicking a nigger, so look out, coon."

"Ah begs ter info'm you fer t'e forty-'leventh time, Mistuh Doughface, dat I'se no niggah," retorted the little black man, apparently in a rage.

"Then you can't play the banjo, Charcoal."

"Ah's de bes' player in t'e firs' colored company in N' Orleans, sah!"

"Then prove it," replied Dross, who really was anxious for some music.

The little black fellow bustled away to get his instrument. Meanwhile the electric boat was passing across the valley, swinging through the water as gracefully as a great bird on the wing.

Seeing a mound near the center of the valley about a hundred feet high, with gently sloping sides and a top of several acres in extent, Lance brought the boat to a halt upon it.

"Get out the diving suits," commanded the boy. "We are going out to explore the valley."

While the others bustled about, Lance made a careful examination of the deep-sea outfits and found them to be in perfect condition.

The suits were of aluminum, braced wherever possible with steel, and with flexible joints which permitted free use of the limbs. They were lined with rubber, and terminated at the hands and feet in rubber gloves and boots, the latter being well guarded with steel soles. Thus were the wearers protected from electric shocks. They were supplied with air according to the most approved methods, the pump in the boat being of automatic construction.

The tubes which connected these suits with the vessel when their wearers were abroad were strong and well protected by an electric current, so that any creature of the sea coming into contact with them would be glad to get away again. These tubes were also very long, so that the wearers might travel comparatively long distances from the electric boat.

The suits were soon adjusted, and then Lance and Dross stepped into the water vestibule, as it was called. This appeared to be an ordinary closet. As soon as the boys were inside, however, with the door through which they had entered securely closed, the young inventor touched a button and the place filled with water. Then he touched another button and a door swung open, giving free access to the bed of the ocean, without permitting a drop of water to enter the boat proper.

With Duff watching the pump, the boys wandered about the ocean valley for a long time. They were armed with long knives as a means of defense against the creatures of that strange locality, and, besides, a strong miner-like lamp attached to each helmet served to keep the inquisitive fishes at a distance. This lamp was fed, of course, from a storage battery.

Deep-water sharks, sea otters, huge fishes of unheard of varieties and squirming serpents with burning eyes loitered about the boys, but they were not molested. Once a monster serpent came in contact with Lance's electric tube and fell dead to the bottom of the sea.

For three days the boys searched the ocean valley in the vicinity of the sandy ridge and elsewhere. Nothing in the shape of a lost treasure ship rewarded them.

"This is great fun," Dross said one day, "but we are not making progress.'

"I did not expect to drop down upon the wreck of the Seabird the first thing," said Lance. "Things are always changing at the bottom of the sea, and the vessel may be miles from the place where she sank beneath the waves. I believe that we are not far from the treasure ship, but shall search the whole Gulf of Honduras rather than give up the quest."

"Ah's wi'f you," said Duff, and he brought out his banjo. Whenever he played the heavy windows of the boat were spotted with fishes, and the little black man called his musical hour his "mahrine exposition." It is probable that the vibration caused these strange visits.

On the morning of the fourth day, Lance resolved to do more searching with the boat, so he moved about cautiously, finding it much easier to look out of a window than to walk about in a heavy diving suit.

"We will take this central mound for a starting point," he explained, "and move round and round it, in ever-widening circles. One must be at the wheel and the others will watch from the windows on either side."

"That's the talk," said Dross, who was tired of wearing a diving suit.

"Hi! Hi! Dat's th' lazy way!" said Duff.

"It's the sure way," said Lance.

As the boat circled the mound, keen eyes in the pilot house kept a sharp lookout for the lost vessel. The powerful searchlight lit up the depths of the sea wonderfully.

The fourth day passed with no trace of the Seabird.

At night the boys took turns at the wheel. One steered and kept a sharp lookout while the others slept. Night was the same as day there, but the boys still observed the habits of the upper world.

On the fifth day they were thrilled at the discovery of a wreck, but it proved to be that of a coasting steamer loaded with coffee and molasses. The crew had evidently been saved, for no bodies were seen.

Another day and night passed, and so two weeks wore away.

No trace of the lost Seabird could be found.

Now and then the Pioneer was forced to the surface in order that the cabins might be freshened with the free air of the upper world, but these pauses in the search were always of short duration.

Finally Lance grew gloomy and depressed. Even his splendid courage was giving way before the perpetual strain and disappointment.

Dross clung more affectionately to his glass pistol, and Duff's banjo tunes were all of a mournful nature.

But, although in a fit of the blues, Lance did not propose to give up his quest. He had much at stake, and whenever he became depressed his thoughts flew back to his mother, waiting for his return with the treasure. So he kept doggedly on.

Another weary week wore away.

Then, on the very last hour of the week, something happened. Dross was at the wheel. Round and round in great circles, like a deep-sea comet, swept the brilliantly-lighted electric boat.

It was Dross' duty to watch closely as well as to turn the wheel and keep the boat in the never-varying circle. On this night, however, he was worn out.

He felt sleepy, and finally caught himself nodding. By a strong effort he roused himself, but soon caught himself at it again.

As a last resort he took a long pull from his pocket "pistol," felt better, in a short time, and so took another.

Poor Dross could never remember just how many more drink he took, but after he had emptied the big flask he found it great fun to turn on more power and twist the wheel about.

Lance was sound asleep and could not know the peril all were in because of the condition of mind into which Dross had drank himself.

Soon the electric boat was off on an entirely new course, and dashing through the water at a speed of sixty miles an hour. The faster she traveled the more excited did the reckless boy become.

"If that old Seabird is anywhere in these waters I'll find her," declared the drunken fellow, peering through the pilot house window.

Then something loomed before him, sharply defined in the strong light cast by the electric lamp.

"Great Heaven, what is that?"

Dross was sober in an instant.

But the instant was too late.

Dross shut off the power, but the boat glided on, seemingly to destruction.

In next weeks issue of this paper the reader will be given another installment of this exciting story. The management has in stock some of the best stories for boys ever written. These will appear in these pages during the coming months. If you desire the Ledger regularly please note our advertisement of a free camera and free patterns on pages thirteen and fifteen and subscribe at once.

He Brought Him in Alive.

Representative Victor Murdock of the Wichita district, is telling this one:

A farmer hired a green Irishman. One of the first tasks assigned the new hired hand was to bring into the cow lot, dead or alive, a refractory bull that had broken into the cornfield. The Irishman was given a shotgun and told to shoot the bull if the animal showed fight. Jauntily he went about his task. The farmer stood at a safe distance to watch developments. As soon as the bull saw the Irishman enter the cornfield, he bolted at him, bellowing madly. The Irishman blazed away with the shotgun and emptied the load in the beast's breast. On rushed the bull, madder than ever. The Irishman took to his heels with the bull after him.

"What are you doing?" screamed the farmer at the fleeing Irishman.

"I'm bringing him alive, sir!" shouted the Irishman between breaths.

A Serious Case.

Mrs. Briske—Johnny, did the doctor call while I was out?

Little Johnny (stopping his play)—Yes'm. He felt my pulse an' looked at my tongue, and shook his head and said it was a very serious case, and he left this prescription, and said he'd call again before night.

Mrs. Briske—Gracious me. It wasn't you I sent him to see; it was the baby.

The Unwritten Law.

(Continued from page seven.)

blowing on her cheeks and looked out toward the bay.

There were a thousand-and-one lights on the river; she seemed to see all of them. She wondered what her friends in the southern continent were doing. Were they waiting to hear the result of the trial?

At last there came to Marice's eyes the lights of a steamship as it came majestically to its pier.

It seemed to fascinate her at the window. She knew not why. Yet it was so.

For some time she watched the steamship coming in at night with its great lights, riding the waters like a thing of life, propelled and guided by the puffing tug.

Marice had seen such sights a hundred times, but it seemed to rivet her attention more than ever.

Was it fate?

Perhaps. She did not know that the steamship which she had seen moving like a huge specter of the waterways was one of the Southern American Line, the Amazon, and that it was just coming in from Rio de Janeiro.

Nay, she did not dream that it carried fate between its decks, nor see in a vision of the night the nemesis that had come from the land of the anaconda and the puma.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. We have several other strange stories of mystery awaiting publication, as well as numerous thrilling stories of adventure and love and life's strange dramas. Now is an excellent time to subscribe and get our splendid camera or any six of our fashionable patterns free as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Book Learning Beat Him

Gen. J. Franklin Bell, while at the head of the artillery and infantry school at Fort Leavenworth, was invited to a dinner given in the cause of education. The educators were called upon and glorified education. Then General Bell said:

"I have been interested in what the speakers preceding me have said about education, and still I think that out our way, in the West, not so much store is set by it as here in the East. I am reminded of the story of the two boys in Omaha, who, I regret to say, were playing poker in a doorway, using kernels of corn for chips. During the game one pushed in a bunch of kernels, and said, 'I'll bet you a hundred.' 'I'll raise it a hundred,' said the other. 'I'll raise that a thousand.' 'I'll see the thousand and raise it to a million.' 'I'll raise that million to a billion.' 'I'll see the billion and raise you a trillion.'

"The other boy was stumped. He thought a long time, but he couldn't remember what came next, so he said, bitterly, 'Take it, you educated son of a gun!' "

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Hopping on a Man.

"Yes, Jedge," said the old colored man who was arraigned for disturbing the peace and asked to plead to the charge, "I reckon I'ze guilty of dat charge, but dar am sunthin to be tooken into considerashun. Yes, sah, I had a row wid Elder Benee of the church, and mebbe I dun frowed him down a leetle too hard, but I had de biggest kind o' provocation. Does yo' know what dat pusson did, sah?"

"I do not," replied his honor, "but you may relate."

"Wall, sah, I was in my pew in church and blessin' de Lawd fur His goodness and about to pray fur rain and ax dat my lottery ticket hit a thousand-dollar prize when de elder comes along mighty sudden and hops on to me."

"How hopped?" asked the court.

"Jes dun told me he had figgered up and found dat I owed thirty-seben hundred dollars pew rent, and he wanted it all right down in a hunk to buy tar to stop up de cracks in de flooh. Dat's de way he hopped on to me, sah, and dun took my breath away."

"I see."

"I owe dat pew rent, Jedge, and I hain't gwine to deny de same, but de suddenness of dat hop jest took my breff away and de fust thing I knowed I had de elder on his back out doahs and wasn't carin' two cents whedder de Lawd sent plenty of rain or let all de watermillyons shrivel up on de vines."

The Quiet Way.

"Speaking about revolutions among our South American cousins," said a Philadelphia speculator, "I had a little whirl at one a few years ago in my sleep. I was in San Salvador to secure a concession from the Government, and I left the President one night after we had eaten and drank and smoked and agreed that the papers should be signed at 9 o'clock the next morning. I went to bed to sleep like a top, and at the hour named I showed up at the palace. Instead of meeting the President I walked in on a chap I had never seen before, and he arose and politely explained:

"'It's all right, senor. At midnight last night the President was bounced out and I was bounced in.'

"'But I heard no rumpus,' I said.

"'O, no, no. We just assassinated him quietly and established the new Government. What can I do for the senor Americano?'

"It had been a revolution with only one man killed and hardly a sleeper aroused," said the speculator, "and when I spoke of it in a complaining way to the landlord of the hotel he replied:

"'O, well, why make a fuss and wake up the women and children over these trifles? I have been here six years and seen five different Presidents, and probably by the time you come again I will be out of the hotel business and holding down the palace myself. Quien sabe? It was you Americans who taught us rapid transit.'"

A Surprise.

Westerner (in Eastern village)—S-a-y, I want a shave, but I can't find no barber shop open.

Resident—This is Sunday and all business stops on Sunday.

Westerner—Huh! Don't the barbers do no shaving at all on Sunday?

Resident—Only in cases of necessity. They are allowed to shave dead men.

Westerner—Waal, by gum! This is the fust time I ever struck a place whar a man who needed a shave on Sunday was expected to kill hisself fust.

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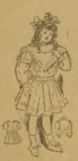
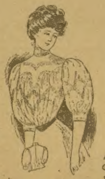
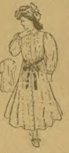

1866 GIRLS JUMPER DRESS 6 TO 12 YEARS


1857 LADIES SHIRT-WAIST 32 TO 42 BUST MEASURE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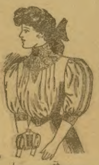
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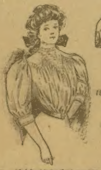
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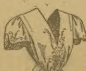
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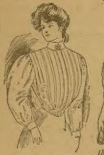
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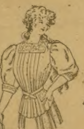
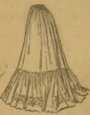
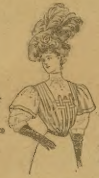

1851 LADIES TUCKED DRESSING-SACK 32 TO 44 INCHES BUST MEASURE


1883 LADIES GATHERED SKIRT 22 TO 34 INCHES WAIST MEASURE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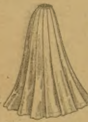
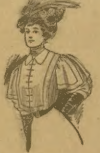

1861 LADIES THIRTEEN-GORED SKIRT 22 TO 34 INCHES WAIST MEASURE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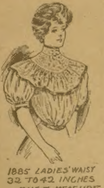
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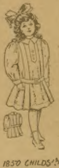
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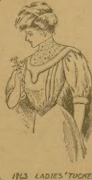
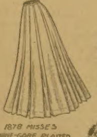
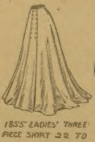
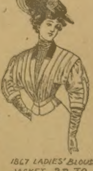

1863 LADIES' TUCKED SHIRT-WAIST 32 TO 42 INCHES BUST MEASURE


1878 MISSES NINE-GORE PLAITED SKIRT 13 TO 17 YEARS


1855 LADIES' THREE PIECE SKIRT 22 TO 34 INCHES WAIST MEASURE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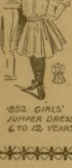
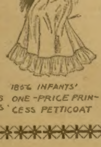

1852 GIRLS' JUMPER DRESS 6 TO 12 YEARS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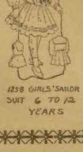
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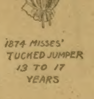
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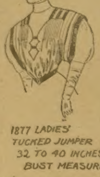
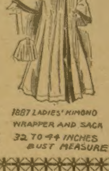

1877 LADIES' TUCKED JUMPER 32 TO 40 INCHES BUST MEASURE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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

A LITTLE GIRL'S PLAINT.

My brother Will, he used to be
  The nicest kind of girl;
He wore a little dress like me,
  And had his hair in curl.
We played with dolls and tea sets then,
  And every kind of toy;
But all these good old times are gone—
  Will turned into a boy.

Mamma has made him little suits,
  With pockets in the pants;
And cut off all his yellow curls,
  And sent them to my aunts.
And Will, he was so pleased, I b'lieve,
  He almost jumped with joy;
But I must own I didn't like
  Will turned into a boy.

And now he plays with horrid tops
  I don't know how to spin,
And marbles that I try to shoot,
  But never hit nor win.
And leapfrog—I can't give a "back"
  Like Charlie, Frank or Roy.
Oh, no one knows how bad I feel
  Since Will has turned a boy!

I have to wear frocks just the same,
  And now they're mostly white,
I have to sit and just be good,
  While Will can climb and fight.
But I must keep my dresses nice,
  And wear my hair in curl,
And, worse—oh worstest thing of all—
  I have to stay a girl!

Two Little Mexican Swallows.

Today and yesterday two little Mexican swallows have been hunting a place for a nest right in our office. One chirps to the other, "Come on in here, Jennie—it's fine! Don't mind those big black animals with white faces. They won't hurt you. Why, I flew quite close to one a while ago and it never even moved! Come! Come! Come! It's lovely! Come! Come! Come! It's fine!"

"No, no, Dickey dear! I'm afraid. I'm afraid!"

"O, sweetie, sweetie, sweetie! Do, do, do, do, come! See, I'm going to fly right close up to that big black animal over there!"

He gives a dart straight over to me and a swoop and slips silently out the door after Jennie.

Then they come back together. But Jennie gets timid again and flies toward the door. Dickey jumps down behind the clock.

"Oh! See, see, see, Jennie! What I've found! What I've found! Something nice and white! And good-to-eat! Good-to-eat! Good-to-eat!"

Then he flew after her with a cracker crumb in his bill. He didn't eat it. He carried it to her and coaxed her to eat it, chirping, "Let's go back! There's lots more! There's lots more! Lots more!"

"No, no! No, no! No, no!"

"I'll take care of you, of you, of you! My sweet, my sweet, my sweet! My sweetie-eetie-eet!"

Then they dart back again. She flutters around frightened, but he perches on the clock and sings to her.

"Come here! right here! over here! Dearie, dearie-dearie-dear! Come-to-me-and-take-a-rest! Here's-the-place-to-build-a-nest! Why not eat the pretty white? Take a bite! Take a bite! Take a bite!"

Just for one moment she perches on the clock beside him and then flies away.

He stays on the clock a while and calls after her so sweetly and persistently. He never gives up, but keeps on trying and trying and trying and some day he'll succeed. And then she'll stay with him on the clock and they'll eat the cracker crumbs together.

It's tomorrow night now and I just must tell you this. Dickey did succeed. And Jennie likes to be in the office now just as much as he does.

Wolves Caught.

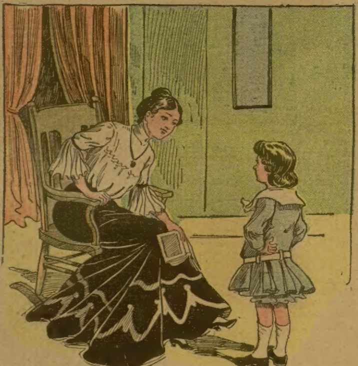
A peasant in Russia was once pursued in his sledge by eleven wolves. Being about two miles from home, he urged his horse to the very extent of his speed. At the entrance to his residence was a gate, which being shut at the time, the frightened horse dashed open and carried his master safely into the courtyard. Nine of the wolves followed them into the inclosure, when, fortunately, the gate swung to and shut them all, as it were, in a trap. Finding themselves thus caught, the animals seemed to lose all their ferocity, as escape was impossible, slunk into holes and corners, molesting no one, and offering no resistance. They were all dispatched without further difficulty.

Fed the Orphans.

Once upon a time a pair of robins had their nest in the fence near the house, while a pair of catbirds had built theirs in a bush close by. The two pairs hatched out their young about the same time; but soon the robins disappeared entirely. Very likely they were shot or trapped; because there must have been some grave cause for parent birds deserting their babies. The young robins appeared to be starving. When the catbirds came with a bit of food for their young the baby robins would make a great noise and poke their heads out as far as they dared.

Presently it was noticed that the catbirds were feeding the orphans.

Every night, too, while one of the catbirds covered its own young, its mate performed a like service for the young robins. In this way both broods were reared, the robins growing up as strong and lively as though they had been cared for by their own parents.



Mother—Now, can you tell me m which of his battles Gen. Wolfe was killed?
Son and Heir—In his last, wasn't it?

Too Hot for Him.

In Montana a few weeks ago a girl named Mary Williams, 12 years old, was alone in her father's cabin when a bear entered.

For a time bruin looked around in a curious way, having never made a social call before, but presently he began growling at the girl, and snowing signs of an intention to eat her.

On the stove was a kettle of hot water with a dipper in it. Mary backed up to the stove as the bear advanced upon her, and, though she was very much frightened, she seized the dipper and flung a pint of boiling water full in his face. It was as good as if he had been shot with a cannon. He roared with pain, rolled over on the floor, and then fled through the door, and did not stop running for a mile. He had probably seen some hot times before, but this was the first time he had felt any hot water.

Had Hypnotic Power.

Prof. Hugh Scott says that Prof. Henry Drummond could hypnotize almost anybody, but he made no use of the power. He discovered when a boy that he had this strange gift.

At a birthday party a little girl declined to play the piano. Drummond happened to catch her eye and said "Play."

To his surprise she rose at once, went to the piano and played.

At another time he hypnotized a boy, and gave him a poker for a gun.

"Now," said Drummond, "I'm a pheasant; shoot me."

The boy did so and Drummond fell to keeping up the illusion, whereupon the boy, seeing the "bird" move, was about to hit it on the head with the poker. Drummond had just time to stop the hypnotized sportsman, and was more careful in his tricks thereafter.

"Mary's Birthday Party."

The little girl had celebrated her third anniversary with a half dozen little friends to help eat ice cream, cake and candy. In the evening, when mother was tucking her in her little crib, she asked the child whether she enjoyed her party and she responded brightly: "Yes, indeed, mamma. May I have another tomorrow day?"

Contradictions.

Some of the very commonest expressions are absolutely contradictory. For instance, "slave," which we apply to human beings who are owned by other human beings, really means a noble, the word originally being "slav."

The following are contradictory words also, but we shall probably go on using them to the end of time:

"Irish stew" is a dish unknown in Ireland.

"Kid gloves" are not made of kid, but of lambskin or sheepskin.

"German silver" is not silver at all, nor of German origin, but has been used in China for centuries.

"Dutch clocks" are of German manufacture.

"Baffin's Bay" is not a bay.

"Turkish baths" are unknown to the Turks.

Why are "turkeys" so called? They do not come from Turkey.

"Titmouse" is a bird.

"Sealing wax" contains no wax.

"Shrew-mouse" is no mouse.

"Rice paper" is not made of rice or the rice plant.

"Blind worms" have eyes and can see.

A RIDDLE.

Little Miss Polly McCarthy
Went to a "beautiful party;"
The ten little girls were so sweet,
The ten little boys were so neat,
The food was delicious and hearty,
The games were the best ever seen.

Little Miss Geraldine Storrow
Came home from a party in sorrow;
The ten little boys were "so bad,"
The ten little girls (oh, how sad!)
Were greedy; she "hoped by tomorrow
They'd know they'd been hateful and
  mean."

'Tis strange, but the beautiful party
Enjoyed by Miss Polly McCarthy
Was the very same party, I'm told,
That made little Miss Geraldine scold;
The very identical party!
Now what could the trouble have been?

A Pony's Good Sense.

A girl 10 years old, named Mary Sears, living in Arkansas, was riding her pony along a highway when he shied at a cow and she was thrown to the ground and suffered a broken arm. It was a mile to the nearest house, and the girl was not able to mount again and in too much pain to walk.

The pony seemed to understand this after a time, and he galloped away and reached the house of a planter and kept up a whinnying until he was taken notice of and a man sent to follow him back to where the girl was found. It was plain that the intelligent animal knew that something out of the usual had happened, and in this case he was just as good a messenger as a boy could have been.

Johnny's Composition.

Johnny was asked to write about the cow. He wrote:

"A cow is an animal with four legs on the under side. The tail is longer than the legs, but it is not used for the same purpose. The cow kills flies with her tail. A cow is bigger than a calf, but not so big as an elephant. She is made small so she can go in the barn door when no one is looking. Some cows is black, and some hook. A dog was hooked once. She tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat. Black cows give white milk. A lot of cows together produce condensed milk."

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